MY PRINTING EXPERIENCES

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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My Printing Experiences

Benj.ª Franklin

PRINTER, AUTHOR, DIPLOMAT
HONORED OF ALL MEN

DRAWN BY COCHIN, 1777 ENGRAVED BY RITCHIE

MY PRINTING EXPERIENCES

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Also a Short
BIOGRAPHY *of* FRANKLIN
by GEO. E. WRAY

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FOREWORD

IT MAY seem somewhat presumptuous to offer to the world a part of the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. This would not now be done but for the fact that printers generally are less interested in Franklin as a statesman, or a diplomat, than in Franklin as a printer. True it is that printers are always ready to honor this great man—he who towers above all other Americans of all time—whether he is considered as a scientist, as a philosopher, or as a patriot—but nevertheless, it is as a printer that printers are drawn to study Franklin.

This, then, is the reason for the reproduction of that portion of Franklin's Autobiography dealing with his connection with the printing business in Colonial times. Much of the matter here presented is as familiar to many as household words. There is little that is new in this book. But it is filled with the sound practical sense abounding in nearly all of Franklin's writings. His homely philosophy has led thousands of people to do a little thinking for themselves. The recital of his experiences has urged many hundreds of young men onward and upward in the path of life. Franklin's struggles

and Franklin's "errata" have alike served to guide others in a better way, pointing out advantages and opportunities as well as dangers and bitter experiences in journeying along.

All printers should know Franklin from entrance to exit, and they should be especially well acquainted with his ups and downs, his successes and failures, as a printer.

An appendix to this volume contains Franklin's "*Way to Wealth*," first published in 1758, or 164 years ago. Its quaint and homely talk carries conviction just as far as when Richard Saunders delivered his alleged talk to those assembled in the Philadelphia market place. And that is to say: "They practised the contrary just as if it had been a common sermon."

A brief sketch by Mr. Geo. E. Wray, of Franklin's early life, of his closing years, and of some of the material things he accomplished for the benefit of humanity, is given in the Appendix.

That this little volume will prove brimful of encouragement to the young printer, helpful to the printer of mature years, cheering to the printer in the prime of life, strengthening to those printers who have passed the meridian, and entertaining and comforting to all printers of both sexes—is the hope of the compilers.

R. T. Porte

SALT LAKE CITY, OCTOBER, 1921

My Printing Experiences

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Chapter One

From Boston to Philadelphia

MY inclinations for the sea were by this time (1723) worn out, or I might have gratify'd them. But, having a trade, and supposing myself a pretty good workman, offered my services to the New York printer, old Mr. William Bradford, who had been the first printer in Pennsylvania, but removed from thence upon the quarrel of George Keith. He could give me no employment, having little to do and help enough already; but says he, "My son at Philadelphia has recently lost his principal hand, Aquila Rose, by death; if you go thither, I believe he may employ you."

Philadelphia was a hundred miles further; I set out, however, in a boat for Amboy, leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea.

In crossing the bay, we met with a squall that tore our rotten sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill, and drove us upon Long Island. In our way, a drunken Dutchman, who was a passenger, too, fell overboard; when he was sinking I reached through the water to his shock pate and drew him up, so that we got him in again.

His ducking sobered him a little and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book, which he desired I should dry for him. It proved to be my old favorite author, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," in Dutch, finely printed on good paper, with copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language. I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and expect it has been more generally read than any other book, except the Bible.

Honest John was the first that I know of who mixed narration and dialogue; a method of writing very engaging to the reader, who in the most interesting parts finds himself, as it were, brought into company and present at the discourse. De Foe in his "Crusoe," his "Moll Flanders," "Religious Courtship," "Family Instructor," and other pieces has imitated it with success; and Richardson has done the same in his "Pamela," etc.

When we drew near the island, we found it was a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surf on the stony beach. So we dropt anchor and swung round towards the shore. Some people came down to the water edge and hallow'd at us, as we did to them; but the wind was so high and the surf so loud that we could not hear so as to understand each other. There were canoes on the shore, and we made signs and hallow'd that they should fetch us; but they either did not understand us or thought it was impracticable, so they went away and, night coming on, we had no remedy but to wait till the wind should abate; and in the meantime the boatman and I concluded to sleep, if we could; and so we crowded into the scuttle with the Dutchman, who was still wet, and the spray, beating over the head of our boat, leak'd through to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay all night, with very little rest; but the wind abating the next day, we made shift to reach Amboy before night, having been thirty hours on the water, without victuals, or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum, the water we sailed on being salt.

In the evening I found myself very feverish, and went in to bed; but, having read somewhere that cold water drank plentifully was good for

a fever, I follow'd the prescription, sweat plentifully most of the night, my fever left me, and in the morning, crossing to the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having fifty miles to Burlington, where I was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia.

It rained very hard all the day: I was thoroughly soak'd and by noon a good deal tired; so I stopt at a poor inn, where I staid all night, beginning now to wish that I had never left home. I cut so miserable a figure, too, that I found by the questions ask'd me, I was suspected to be some runaway servant and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However, I proceeded the next day, and got in the evening to an inn, within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Doctor Brown. He entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment and, finding I had read a little, became very sociable and friendly.

Our acquaintance continued as long as he lived. He had been, I imagine, an itinerant doctor, for there was no town in England, or country in Europe of which he could not give a very particular account. He had some letters, and was ingenious, but much of an unbeliever, and wickedly undertook some years after, to travestie the Bible in doggerel verse, as Cotton

had done Virgil. By this means he set many of the facts in a very ridiculous light, and might have hurt weak minds if his work had been published; but it never was.

At his house I lay that night, and the next morning reach'd Burlington, but had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before my coming, and no other expected to go before Tuesday, this being Saturday; wherefore I returned to an old woman in the town, of whom I had bought gingerbread to eat on the water, and ask'd her advice. She invited me to lodge at her house till a passage by water should offer; and being tired with my foot travelling, I accepted the invitation. She, understanding I was a printer, would have had me stay at that town and follow my business, being ignorant of the stock necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of oxcheek with great good will, accepting only a pot of ale in return; and I thought myself fixed till Tuesday should come.

However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going toward Philadelphia, with several people in her. They took me in, and, as there was no wind, we row'd all the way, and about midnight, not having seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it,

and would row no farther; the others knew not where we were; so we put towards the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold in October, and there we remained till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arriv'd there about eight or nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, and landed at the Market street wharf.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuff'd out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with traveling, rowing and want of rest, I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of the boat for my passage, who at first refus'd it on account of my rowing; but I insisted on their taking it; a man being sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than

when he has plenty, perhaps thro' fear of being thought to have but little.

Then I walked up the street, gazing about till near the market-house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to in Second street and ask'd for a biscuit, intending such as we had in Boston; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none such. So not considering or knowing the difference of money and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I had him give me three-penny worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surpris'd at the quantity, but took it, and having no room in my pockets, walk'd off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other.

Thus I went up Market street, as far as Fourth street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made—as I most certainly did—a most awkward and ridiculous appearance.

Then I turned and went down Chestnut street and part of Walnut street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again in Market street wharf, near the boat I

FRANKLIN AT MARKET AND FOURTH STREETS, PHILADELPHIA, IN 1723

came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water; and being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us.

Thus, refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy thro' labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell asleep, and continu'd so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in in Philadelphia.

While walking down toward the river, and, looking in the faces of people, I met a young Quaker man, whose countenance I lik'd, and, accosting him, requested he would tell me where a stranger could get lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners.

"Here," says he, "is one place that entertains strangers, but it is not a reputable house; if thee will walk with me I'll show thee a better."

Chapter Two

Franklin Meets Keimer

HE BROUGHT me to the Crooked Billet in Water street. Here I got a dinner; and while I was eating it, several sly questions were asked of me, as it seemed to be suspected from my youth and appearance that I might be some runaway.

After dinner my sleepiness return'd, and being shown to a bed I lay down without undressing, and slept till six in the evening, was call'd to supper, went to bed again very early and slept soundly till next morning. Then I made myself as tidy as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford the printer's.

I found in the shop the old man, his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who, travelling on horseback, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduc'd me to his son, who receiv'd me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately suppli'd with one; but there was another printer in town lately set up, one Keimer, who, perhaps, might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then till fuller business should offer.

The old gentleman said he would go with me to the new printer; and when he found him:

"Neighbor," says Bradford, "I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps you may want such a one."

He ask'd me a few questions, put a composing stick into my hand to see how I work'd, and then said he would employ me soon, though he had just then nothing for me to do; and, taking old Bradford, whom he had never seen before, to be one of the town's people that had a good will for him, entered into a conversation on his present undertaking and prospects; while Bradford, not discovering that he was another printer's father, on Keimer's saying he expected to get the greatest part of the business into his own hands, drew him out by artful questions, and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what interest he reli'd on, and in what manner he expected to proceed.

I, who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old sophister, and the other was a mere novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surpris'd when I told him who the old man was.

Keimer's printing house, I found consisted of an old shatter'd press, and one small, worn-out font of English, which he was then using himself, composing an Elegy on Aquila Rose, before

mentioned, an ingenious young man of excellent character, much respected in the town, clerk of the Assembly, and a pretty poet.

Keimer made verses too, but very indifferently. He could not be said to write them, for his manner was to compose them in the types directly out of his head. So there being no copy, but one pair of cases, and the Elegy likely to require all the letter, no one could help him.

I endeavor'd to put his press (which he had not yet used, and of which he understood nothing) into order fit to be work'd with; and, promising to come and print off his Elegy as soon as he should have got it ready, I return'd to Bradford's who gave me a little job to do for the present, and there I lodged and dieted.

A few days later, Keimer sent for me to print off the Elegy. And now he had another pair of cases, and a pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work.

These two printers I found poorly qualified for their business. Bradford had not been bred for it, and was very illiterate; and Keimer, tho' seeming to be something of a scholar, was a mere compositor, knowing nothing of presswork. He had been one of the French prophets, and could act their enthusiastic agitations. At this time he did not profess any particular religion, but something of all on occasion; was very

ignorant of the world and had, as I afterward found, a good deal of the knave in his composition. He did not like my lodging at Bradford's while I worked with him. He had a house, indeed, but without furniture, so he could not lodge me; but he got me a lodging at Mr. Read's, before mentioned, who was the owner of his house; and my chest and clothes being come by this time, I made rather a more respectable appearance in the eyes of Miss Read than I had done when she first happen'd to see me eating my roll in the street.

I began now to have some acquaintance among the young people of the town that were lovers of reading, with whom I spent my evenings very pleasantly; and gaining money by my industry and frugality, I lived very agreeably forgetting Boston as much as I could, and not desiring that any there should know where I resided, except my friend Collins, who was in my secret, and kept it when I wrote to him.

At length, an incident happened that sent me back again much sooner than I had intended. I had a brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, master of a sloop that traded between Boston and Delaware. He being at New Castle, forty miles below Philadelphia, heard there of me and wrote me a letter mentioning the concern of my friends in Boston at my abrupt departure, assuring me

of their good will to me, and that everything would be accommodated to my mind if I would return, to which he exhorted me very earnestly. I wrote an answer to his letter, thank'd him for the advice but stated my reasons for quitting Boston fully and in such light as to convince him I was not so wrong as he had apprehended.

Sir William Keith, governor of the province, was then at New Castle, and Captain Holmes, happening to be in company with him when my letter came to hand, spoke to him of me, and show'd him the letter. The governor read it, and seemed surpris'd when he was told my age.

He said I appear'd a young man of promising parts, and therefore should be encouraged; the printers at Philadelphia were wretched ones; and if I set up there he had no doubt I should succeed; for his part, he would procure me the public business, and do me every other service in his power.

This my brother-in-law afterwards told me in Boston, but I knew as yet nothing of it; when one day, Keimer and I being at work together near the window, we saw the governor and another gentleman (which proved to be Colonel French of New Castle,) finely dress'd, coming directly across the street to our house, and heard them at the door.

Keimer ran down immediately thinking it a visit to him; but the governor inquired for me, came up, and with a condescension and politeness I had been quite unused to, made me many compliments, desired to be acquainted with me, blam'd me kindly for not having made myself known to him when I first came to the place, and would have me away with him to the tavern, where he was going with Colonel French to taste, as he said, some excellent Madeira.

I was not a little surpris'd, and Keimer star'd like a pig poisoned.

I went, however, with the governor and Colonel French to a tavern, at the corner of Third street, and over the Madeira he propos'd my setting up in business, laid before me the probabilities of success, and both he and Colonel French assur'd me I should have their interest and influence in procuring the public business of both governments.

On my doubting whether my father would assist me in it, Sir William said he would give me a letter to him. So it was concluded that I should return to Boston in the first vessel, with the governor's letter recommending me to my father. In the meantime the intention was to be kept a secret, and I went on working with Keimer as usual, the governor sending for me now and then to dine with him, (a very great

honor I thought it,) and conversing with me in the most affable, familiar and friendly manner imaginable.

About the end of April, 1724, a little vessel offer'd for Boston. I took leave of Keimer as going to see my friends. The governor gave me an ample letter, saying many flattering things of me to my father, and strongly recommending the project of my setting up at Philadelphia as a thing that must make my fortune. We struck on a shoal in going down the bay, and sprung a leak; we had a blustering time at sea, and were oblig'd to pump almost continually, at which I took my turn. We arriv'd safe, however, at Boston in about a fortnight.

I had been absent seven months, and my friends had heard nothing of me; for my brother-in-law Holmes was not yet returned and had not written about me. My unexpected appearance surpris'd the family; all were, however, very glad to see me and made me welcome, except my brother. I went to see him at his printing-house. I was better dress'd than ever while in his service, having a genteel new suit from head to foot, a watch, and my pockets lin'd with near five pounds sterling in silver. He received me not very frankly, look'd me all over, and turn'd to his work again.

The journeymen were inquisitive where I had been, what sort of country it was, and how I lik'd it. I prais'd it much, and the happy life I had led in it, expressing strongly my intention of returning to it; and one of them asking what kind of money we had there, I produced a handful of silver, and spread it before them, which was a kind of raree-show they had not been used to, paper being the money of Boston. Then I took an opportunity of letting them see my watch; and lastly (my brother still glum and sullen) I gave them a piece of eight to drink, and took my leave.

This visit of mine offended him extremely; for when my mother some time after spoke to him of a reconciliation, and of her wishes to see us on good terms together, and that we might live for the future as brothers, he said I had insulted him in such a manner before his people that he could never forget or forgive it. In this, however, he was mistaken.

Chapter Three

A Quakeress Befriends Him

MY FATHER received the governor's letter with some apparent surprise, but said little of it to me for some days, when, Captain Holmes returning, he showed it to him, asked him if he knew Keith, and what kind of a man he was; adding his opinion that he must be a man of small discretion to think of setting a boy up in business who wanted yet three years of being at man's estate. Holmes said what he could in favor of the project, but my father was clear, in the impropriety of it, and at last gave a flat denial to it. Then he wrote a civil letter to Sir William, thanking him for the patronage he had so kindly offered me, but declining to assist me as yet in setting up, I being, in his opinion, too young to be entrusted with the management of a business so important, and for which the preparation must be so expensive.

My friend and companion Collins, who was a clerk in the postoffice, pleased with the account I gave him of my new country, determined to go thither also; and, while I waited for my father's determination, he set out before me by land, to Rhode Island, leaving his books,

which were a pretty collection of mathematics and natural philosophy, to come with mine to me to New York, where he proposed to wait for me.

My father, tho' he did not approve Sir William's proposition, was yet pleased that I had been able to obtain so advantageous a character from a person of such note where I had resided, and that I had been so industrious and careful as to equip myself so handsomely in so short a time; therefore, seeing no prospect of an accommodation between my brother and me, he gave his consent to my returning to Philadelphia and advised me to behave respectfully to the people there, endeavor to obtain the general esteem, and avoid lampooning and libeling, to which he thought I had too much inclination; telling me that by steady industry and a prudent parsimony I might save enough by the time I was one-and-twenty to set me up; and that if I came near the matter he would help me out with the rest. This was all I could obtain except some small gifts as tokens of his and my mother's love, when I embarked again for New York, now with their approbation and their blessing.

The sloop putting in at Newport, Rhode Island, I visited my brother John, who had been married and settled there for some years. He received me very affectionately, for he always lov'd me. A friend of his, one Vernon, having

some money due him in Pennsylvania, about thirty-five pounds currency, desired I would receive it for him, and keep it till I had his direction what to remit it in. Accordingly he gave me an order. This afterwards occasioned me a great deal of uneasiness.

At Newport we took in a number of passengers for New York, among which were two young women companions, and a grave, sensible, matron-like Quaker woman, with her attendants. I had shown an obliging willingness to do her some little services, which impressed her I suppose with a degree of good-will toward me; therefore, when she saw a daily growing familiarity between me and the two young women, which they appeared to encourage, she took me aside, and said, "Young man, I am concerned for thee, as thou hast no friend with thee, and seem not to know much of the world, or of the snares youth is exposed to; depend upon it, those are very bad women; I can see it in all their actions; and if thou art not upon thy guard, they will draw thee into some danger; they are strangers to thee, and I advise thee, in a friendly concern for thy welfare, to have no acquaintance with them."

As I seemed at first not to think so ill of them as she did, she mentioned some things she had observed and heard that had escaped my notice,

but now convinced me she was right. I thanked her for her kind advice, and I promised to follow it.

When we arrived at New York they told me where they lived and invited me to come and see them; but I avoided it, and it was well I did; for the next day the captain missed a silver spoon and some other things that had been taken out of his cabin, and knowing these were a couple of strumpets, he got a warrant to search their lodgings, found the stolen goods and had the thieves punished. So tho' we had escaped a sunken rock, which we scraped upon in the passage, I thought this escape of rather more importance to me.

At New York I found my friend Collins, who had arrived there sometime before me. We had been intimate from children, and had read the same books together; but he had had the advantage of more time for reading and studying, and a wonderful genius for mathematical learning, in which he far outstript me. While I lived in Boston, most of my hours of leisure for conversation were spent with him, and he continued a sober as well as an industrious lad; was much respected for his learning by several of the clergy and other gentlemen, and seemed to promise to make a good figure in life. But, during my absence he had acquired a habit of

sotting with brandy; and I found by his own account, and what I heard from others, that he had been drunk every day since his arrival at New York, and behaved very oddly. He had gam'd it too, and lost money, so that I was obliged to discharge his lodgings and defray his expenses to and at Philadelphia which proved extremely inconvenient to me.

The then governor of New York, Burnet (son of Bishop Burnet), hearing from the captain that a young man, one of the passengers, had a great many books, desired he would bring me to see him. I waited upon him accordingly, and should have taken Collins with me but he was not sober. The governor treated me with great civility, showed me his library which was a very large one, and we had a good deal of conversation about books and authors. This was the second governor who had done me the honor to take notice of me, which to a poor boy like me was pleasing.

We proceeded to Philadelphia. I received on the way Vernon's money, without which we could hardly have finished our journey. Collins wished to be employed in some counting house; but whether they discovered his dramming by his breath or by his behavior, tho' he had some recommendations, he met with no success in any application, and continued lodging and boarding

at the same house with me, and at my expense. Knowing I had that money of Vernon's he was continually borrowing of me, still promising repayment as soon as he should be in business. At length he had got so much of it that I was distressed to think what I should do in case of being called on to remit it.

Chapter Four

Trust Not in Promises

HIS EXCESSIVE drinking continued, about which we often quarrell'd; for when a little intoxicated, he was very fractious. Once, in a boat on the Delaware with some other young men, he refused to row in his turn.

"I will be row'd home," says he.

"We will not row you," says I.

"You must or stay all night on the water," says he, "just as you please."

The other said "Let us row; what signifies it?"

But my mind being soured with his other conduct, I continued to refuse. So he swore he would make me row, or throw me overboard; and coming along, stepping on the thwarts, toward me, when he came up and struck at me, I clapped my other hand on his crutch, and rising, pitched him head foremost into the river. I knew he was a good swimmer, and so was under little concern about him; but before he could get around to lay hold of the boat, we had with a few strokes pulled her out of reach; and ever when he drew near the boat, we asked if he would row, striking a few strokes to slide away

from him. He was ready to die with vexation, and obstinately would not promise to row. However, seeing him at last beginning to tire, we lifted him in and brought him home dripping wet in the evening.

We hardly exchanged a civil word afterwards, and a West Indian captain, who had a commission to procure a tutor for the sons of a gentleman at Barbadoes, happening to meet with him, agreed to carry him thither. He left me then, promising to remit me the first money he should receive in order to discharge the debt; but I never heard of him after.

The breaking into this money of Vernon's was the first of the great errata of my life; and the affair showed my father was not much out in his judgment when he supposed me too young to manage business of importance. But Sir William, on reading his letter, said he was too prudent. There was great difference in persons; and discretion did not always accompany years, nor was youth always without it.

"And since he will not set you up," says he, "I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolved to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed."

This was spoken with an appearance of cordiality, that I had not the least doubt of his meaning what he said. I had hitherto kept the proposition of setting up a secret in Philadelphia, and I still kept it. Had it been known that I depended on the governor, probably some friend that knew him better would have advised me not to rely on him, as I afterwards heard it was his known character to be liberal of promises which he never meant to keep. Yet, unsolicited as he was by me, how could I think his generous offer insincere? I believed him one of the best men in the world.

I presented him an inventory of a little printing house, amounting to (by my computation) about one hundred pounds sterling. He liked it, but asked me if my being on the spot in England to choose the types, and see that everything was good of the kind, might not be of some advantage.

"Then," said he, "when there you can make acquaintances, and establish correspondences in the bookselling and stationery way."

I agreed that this might be advantageous.

"Then," says he, "get yourself ready to go with Annis;" which was the annual ship, and the only one at that time usually passing between London and Philadelphia.

But it would be some months before the Annis sailed so I continued working with Keimer, fretting about the money Collins had got from me, and in daily apprehension of being called upon by Vernon, which, however, did not happen for some years after.

I believe I have omitted mentioning that, in my first voyage from Boston, being becalmed off Block Island, our people set about catching cod, and hauled up a great many. Hitherto I had stuck to my resolution of not eating animal food, and on this occasion, I considered, with my master Tryon, the taking of every fish as a kind of unprovoked murder, since none of them had, or ever could do us any injury that might justify the slaughter. All this seemed very reasonable. But I had formerly been a great lover of fish, and when this came hot out of the frying-pan, it smelt admirably well. I balanced some time between principle and inclination till I recollected that, when the fish were opened, I saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs; then thought I, "If you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you."

So I dined upon cod very heartily, and continued to eat with other people, returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable diet. So convenient a thing is it to be a reasonable

creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for every thing one has a mind to do.

Keimer and I lived on a pretty good familiar footing, and agreed tolerably well, for he suspected nothing of my setting up. He retained a great deal of his old enthusiasms and loved argumentation. We therefore had many disputations. I used to work him so with my Socratic method, and had trepanned him so often by questions apparently so distant from any point we had in hand, and yet by degrees led to the point, and brought him into difficulties and contradictions, that at last he grew ridiculously cautious, and would hardly answer me the most common question, without asking first, "What do you intend to infer from that?"

However, he gave me so high an opinion of my ability in the confuting way, that he seriously proposed my being his colleague in a project he had of setting up a new sect. He was to preach the doctrines, and I was to confound all opponents. When he came to explain with me upon the doctrines, I found several conundrums which I objected to, unless I might have my way a little too, and introduce some of mine.

Keimer wore his beard in full length because somewhere in the Mosaic law it is said, "Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard." He likewise kept the seventh day, Sabbath; and

these two points were essentials with him. I disliked both; and agreed to admit them on condition of his adopting the doctrine of using no animal food.

"I doubt," said he, "my constitution will bear that."

I then assured him it would and that he would be better for it. He was usually a great glutton, and I promised myself some diversion in half starving him. He agreed to try the practice if I would keep him company. I did so, and we held it for three months. We had our victuals dressed,and brought to us regularly by a woman in the neighborhood, who had from me a list of forty dishes, to be prepared for us at different times, in all which there was neither fish, flesh nor fowl, and the whim suited me better at this time from the cheapness of it, not costing us above eighteen pence sterling each per week.

I have since kept several Lents most strictly, leaving the common diet for that, and that for common, abruptly, without the least inconvenience, so that I think there is little in the advice of making those changes by easy gradations. I went on pleasantly, but poor Keimer suffered grievously, tired of the project, longed for the flesh pot of Egypt, and ordered a roast pig. He invited me and two women friends to dine with him; but it being brought too soon on the table,

he could not resist the temptation, and ate the whole before we came.

I had made some courtship during this time to Miss Read. I had a great respect and affection for her, and had some reason to believe she had the same for me; but as I was about to take a long voyage, and we were both very young, only a little above eighteen, it was thought most prudent by her mother to prevent our going too far at present, as a marriage, if it was to take place, would be more convenient after my return, when I should be, as I expected, set up in my business. Perhaps, too, she thought my expectations not so well founded as I imagined them to be.

My chief acquaintances at this time were Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson, and James Ralph, all lovers of reading. The two first were clerks to an eminent scrivener or conveyancer in the town, Charles Brogden; the other was a clerk to a merchant.

Watson was a pious, sensible young man, of great integrity; the others rather more lax in their principles of religion, particularly Ralph, who, as well as Collins, had been unsettled by me, for which they both made me suffer.

Osborne was sensible, candid, frank; sincere and affectionate to his friends; but, in literary matters, too fond of criticising.

Ralph was ingenious, genteel in his manners, and extremely eloquent; I think I never knew a prettier talker. Both of them great admirers of poetry and began to try their hands in little pieces. Many pleasant walks we four had together on Sundays into the woods, near Schuylkill, where we read to one another, and conferred on what we read.

Ralph was inclined to pursue the study of poetry, not doubting but he might become eminent in it, and make his fortune by it, alleging that the best poets must, when they first begin to write, make as many faults as he did. Osborne, dissuaded him, assured him he had no genius for poetry, and advised him to think of nothing beyond the business he was bred to; that in the mercantile way, tho' he had no stock, he might, by his diligence and punctuality, recommend himself to employment as a factor, and in time acquire wherewith to trade on his own account. I approved the amusing one's self with poetry now and then, so far as to improve one's language, but no further.

On this it was proposed that we should each of us, at our next meeting, produce a piece of our own composing, in order to improve by our mutual observations, criticisms, and corrections. As language and expression were what we had in view, we excluded all consideration of

invention and agreed that the task should be a version of the eighteenth Psalm, which describes the descent of a Deity. When the time of our meeting drew nigh, Ralph called on me first and let me know his piece was ready. I told him I had been busy, and, having little inclination, had done nothing. He then showed me his piece for my opinion, and I much approved it, as it appeared to me to have great merit.

"Now," says he, "Osborne never will allow the least merit in anything of mine, but makes a thousand criticisms out of mere envy. He is not so jealous of you; I wish therefore, you would take this piece, and produce it as yours; I will pretend not to have had time and will produce nothing. We shall then see what he will say.

It was agreed and I immediately transcribed it, that it might appear in my own hand.

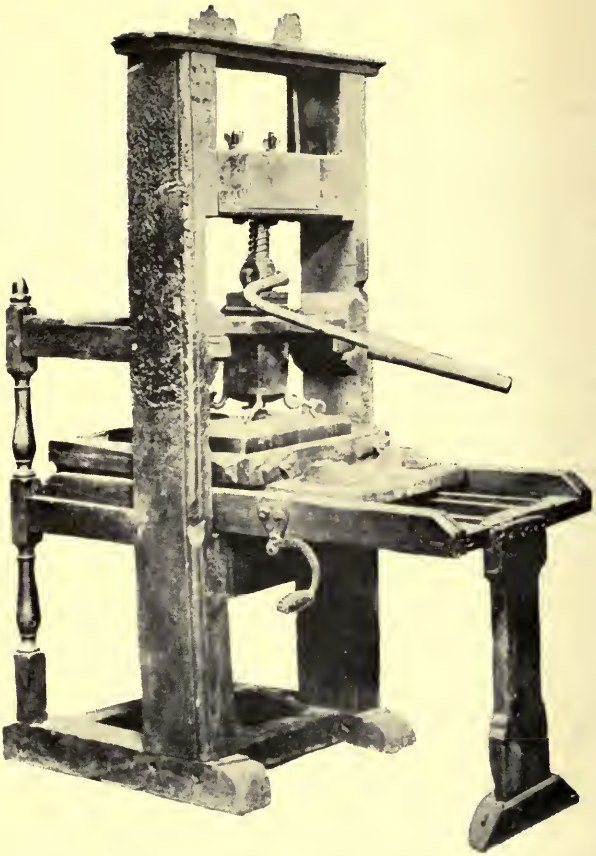
We met; Watson's performance was read; there were some beauties in it, but many defects. Osborne's was read; it was much better; Ralph did it justice; remarked some faults, but applauded the beauties. He himself had nothing to produce, I was backward; seemed desirous of being excused; had not had sufficient time to correct, etc.; but no excuse could be admitted; produce I must. It was read and repeated; Watson and Osborne gave up the contest, and joined in applauding it. Ralph only made some

criticisms, and proposed some amendments, but I defended my text. Osborne was against Ralph, and told him he was no better critic than poet, so he dropped the argument. As they two went home together, Osborne expressed himself still more strongly in favor of what he thought my production; having restrained himself before, as he said lest I should think it flattery.

"But who would have imagined," said he, "Franklin had been capable of such a performance; such painting; such force, such fire! He has even improved the original. In his common conversation he seems to have no choice of words; he hesitates and blunders; and yet, Good God! How he writes!"

When we next met Ralph discovered the trick we had played him, and Osborne was a little laughed at.

This transaction fixed Ralph in his resolution of becoming a poet. I did all I could to dissuade him from it, but he continued scribbling verses till Pope cured him. He became, however, a pretty good prose writer. More of him hereafter. But as I may not have occasion again to mention the other two, I shall just remark here, that Watson died in my arms a few years after, much lamented, being the best of our set. Osborne went to the West Indies, where he became an eminent lawyer and made money but died young.



Dr. Franklin's remarks relative to this press, made when he came to England as agent of the Massachusetts in 1768. The Dr. at this time visited the printing office of Mr. Watts, of Wild Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and going up to this particular press, thus addressed the men who were working at it: *"Come, my friends, we will drink together: it is now forty years since I worked like you, at this press, as a journeyman printer."* The Dr. then sent for a gallon of porter, and he drank with them, "Success to Printing." (Inscription on the above hand press.)

It is 197 years since Franklin worked at this press, now in the National Museum, Washington, D. C., the gift of John B. Murray, banker, 1841

He and I had made a serious agreement, that the one who happened first to die should, if possible, make a friendly visit to the other, and acquaint him how he found things in that separate state. But he never fulfilled his promise.

The governor, seeming to like my company, had me frequently to his house, and his setting me up was always mentioned as a fixed thing. I was to take with me letters recommendatory to a number of his friends, besides the letter of credit to furnish me with the necessary money for purchasing the press and types, paper, etc. For these letters I was appointed to call at different times, when they were to be ready, but a future time was still named. Thus he went on till the ship, whose departure too had several times been postponed, was on the point of sailing. Then, when I called to take my leave and receive the letters, his secretary, Dr. Bard, came out to me and said the governor was extremely busy writing, but would be down at Newcastle before the ship, and there the letters would be delivered to me.

Ralph, though married and having one child, had determined to accompany me on this voyage. It was thought he intended to establish a correspondence, and obtain goods to sell on commission; but I found afterwards, that thro' some discontent with his wife's relations, he

purposed to leave her on their hands and never return again.

Having taken leave of my friends, and interchanged some promise with Miss Read, I left Philadelphia in the ship, which anchored at Newcastle. The governor was there, but when I went to his lodging, the secretary came to me from him with the civilest message in the world, that he could not then see me, being engaged in business of the utmost importance, but should send the letters to me on board, wished me heartily a good voyage and a speedy return, etc. I returned on board a little puzzled and yet not doubting.

Chapter Five

Gets Work in London

MR. ANDREW HAMILTON, a famous lawyer of Philadelphia, had taken passage in the same ship for himself and son, and with Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant, and Messrs. Onino and Russel, masters of iron works in Maryland, had engaged the great cabin so that Ralph and I were forced to take up with a berth in the steerage, and none on board knowing us, we were considered as ordinary persons. But Mr. Hamilton and his son (it was James, since governor) returned from New Castle to Philadelphia, the father being called by a great fee to plead for a seized ship, and just before we sailed, Colonel French, coming on board and showing me great respect, I was more taken notice of and with my friend Ralph invited by the other gentlemen to come into the cabin, there now being room. Accordingly, we removed thither.

Understanding that Colonel French had brought on board the governor's dispatches, I asked the captain for those letters that were to be under my care. He said all were put into the bag together and he could not then come at them; but before we landed in England I should

have an opportunity of picking them out; so I was satisfied for the present, and we proceeded on our voyage. We had a sociable company in the cabin, and lived uncommonly well, having the addition of all Mr. Hamilton's stores, who had laid in plentifully. In this passage Mr. Denham contracted a friendship for me that continued through life. The voyage was otherwise not a pleasant one, as we had a great deal of bad weather.

When we came into the Channel, the captain kept his word with me, and gave me an opportunity of examining the bag for the governor's letters. I found none upon which my name was put as under my care. I picked out six or seven that, by the handwriting, I thought might be the promised letters, especially as one of them was directed to Basket, the King's printer, and another to some stationer. We arrived in London the 24th of December, 1724. I waited upon the stationer, who came first in my way, delivering the letter as from Governor Keith.

"I don't know such a person," said he; but opening the letter, "O! this is from Riddlesden. I have recently found him to be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him."

So, putting the letter in my hand, he turned on his heel and left me, to serve a customer. I was surprised to find these were not the governor's

letters; and after recollecting and comparing circumstances I began to doubt his sincerity. I found my friend Denham, and opened the whole affair to him. He let me into Keith's character, told me there was not the least probability that he had written the letters for me; that none who knew him had the smallest dependence on him; and he laughed at the notion of the governor's giving me a letter of credit, having as he said, no credit to give. On my expressing my concern about what I should do, he advised me to endeavor getting some employment in the way of my business.

"Among the printers here," said he, "you will improve yourself, and when you return to America, you will set up to greater advantage."

We both of us happened to know, as well as the stationer, that Riddlesden, the attorney, was a very knave. He had half ruined Miss Read's father by persuading him to be bound for him. By this letter it appeared there was a secret scheme on foot to the prejudice of Hamilton (supposed to be then coming over with us); and that Keith was concerned in it with Riddlesden. Denham, who was a friend of Hamilton's, thought he ought to be acquainted with it; so when he arrived in England, which was soon after, partly from resentment and ill-will to Keith and Riddlesden, and partly from good

will to him, I waited on him and gave him the letter. He thanked me cordially, the information being of importance to him; and from that time he became my friend, greatly to my advantage afterwards on many occasions.

But what shall we think of a governor's playing such pitiful tricks, and imposing so grossly on a poor ignorant boy? It was a habit he had acquired. He wished to please everybody; and having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise ingenious and a sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good governor for the people, tho' not for his constituents, the proprietaries, whose instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best laws were of his planning and passed during his administration.

Ralph and I were inseparable companions. We took lodgings together in Little Britain at three shillings and sixpence a week—as much as we could afford. He now let me know his intentions of remaining in London and that he never meant to return to Philadelphia. He had brought no money with him, the whole he could muster having been expended in paying his passage. I had fifteen pistoles, so he borrowed occasionally of me to subsist, while he was looking out for business.

He first endeavored to get into the playhouse believing himself qualified for an actor, but Wilkes, to whom he applied, advised him candidly not to think of that employment, as it was impossible that he should succeed in it. Then he proposed to Roberts, a publisher in Paternoster Row, to write for him a weekly paper like the Spectator, on certain conditions, which Roberts did not approve. Then he endeavored to get employment as a hackney writer, to copy for the stationers and lawyers about the Temple, but could find no vacancy.

I immediately got into work at Palmer's, then a famous printing house in Bartholomew Close, and here I continued near a year. I was pretty diligent, but spent with Ralph a good deal of my earnings in going to plays, and other places of amusement. We had together consumed all my pistoles, and now just rubbed on from hand to mouth. He seemed quite to forget his wife and child, and I, by degrees, my engagements with Miss Read, to whom I never wrote more than one letter, and that was to let her know I was not likely soon to return.

This was another of the great errata of my life, which I should wish to correct if I were to live it over again. In fact, by our expenses I was constantly kept unable to pay my passage.

At Palmer's I was employed in composing for the second edition of Wollaston's "Religion of Nature." Some of his reasonings not appearing to me well founded, I wrote a little metaphysical piece in which I made remarks on them. It was entitled "A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain." I inscribed it to my friend Ralph; I printed a small number. It occasioned my being more considered by Mr. Palmer as a young man of some ingenuity, though he seriously expostulated with me upon the principles of my pamphlet, which to him appeared abominable. My printing this pamphlet was another erratum.

While I lodged in Little Britain, I made an acquaintance with one Wilcox, a bookseller, whose shop was at the next door. He had an immense collection of second-hand books. Circulating libraries were not then in use; but we agreed that, on certain reasonable terms, which I have not forgotten, I might take, read and return any of his books.

Chapter Six

He Philosophizes on Beer Drinking

MY PAMPHLET by some means falling into the hands of one Lyons, a surgeon, author of a book entitled "The Infallibility of Human Judgment," it occasioned an acquaintance between us. He took great notice of me, called on me often to converse on those subjects, carried me to the Horns, a pale ale house in —— Lane, Cheapside, and introduced me to Doctor Mandeville, author of the "Fables of the Bees," who had a club there, of which he was the soul, being the most facetious, entertaining companion. Lyons, too, introduced me to Doctor Pemberton, at Baston's coffee house, who promised to give me an opportunity, some time or other, of seeing Sir Isaac Newton, of which I was extremely desirous; but this never happened.

I had brought over a few curiosities, among which the principal was a purse made of the asbestos, which purifies by fire. Sir Hans Sloane heard of it, came to see me, and invited me to his house in Bloomsbury Square, where he showed me all his curiosities, and persuaded me to let him add that to the number, for which he paid me handsomely.

In our house there lodged a young woman, a milliner, who, I think, had a shop in the Cloisters. She had been genteelly bred, was sensible and lively, and of most pleasing conversation.

Ralph read plays to her in the evenings, they grew intimate, she took another lodging and he followed her. They lived together some time; but he still being out of business, and her income not sufficient to maintain them with the child, he took a resolution of going from London, to try for a country school, which he thought himself well qualified to undertake, as he wrote an excellent hand and was master of arithmetic and accounts. This, however, he deemed a business below him, and confident of future better fortune, when he should be unwilling to have it known that he once was meanly employed, he changed his name, and did me the honor to assume mine; for I soon after had a letter from him, acquainting me that he was settled in a small village (in Berkshire, I think it was, where he taught reading and writing to ten or a dozen boys, at six-pence each week), and recommending Mrs. T. to my care, and asking me to write to him, directing for Mr. Franklin, schoolmaster, at such a place.

He continued to write frequently, sending me large specimens of an epic poem which he was then composing, and desiring my remarks

and corrections. These I gave him from time to time, but endeavored rather to discourage his proceedings.

One of Young's Satires was then just published. I copied and sent him a great part of it, which set in strong light the folly of pursuing the muses with any hope of advancement by them. All was in vain. Sheets of the poem continued to come by every post.

In the meantime Mrs. T., having on his account lost her friends and business, was often in distresses, and used to send for me and borrow what I could spare to help her out of them. I grew fond of her company, and, being at that time under no religious restraint, and presuming upon my importance to her, I attempted familiarities (another erratum) which she repulsed with a proper resentment, and acquainted him with my behavior.

This made a breach between us; and, when he returned again to London, he let me know he thought I had cancell'd all obligations he had been under to me. So I found I was never to expect his repaying me what I had lent him or advanced for him. This, however, was not then of much importance as he was totally unable; and in the loss of his friendship I found myself relieved from a burden. I now began to think of getting a little money beforehand, and, expecting

better work, I left Palmer's to work at Watts's near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a still greater printing house. Here I continued all the rest of my stay in London.

At my first admission into this printing house I took to working at the press, imagining I felt a want of bodily exertion I had been used to in America, where presswork is mixed with composing.

I drank only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great guzzlers of beer. On occasions I carried up and downstairs a large form of types in each hand when others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and other instances, that the Water-American, as they called me, was stronger than themselves who drank strong beer.

We had an ale-house boy who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom, but it was necessary, he supposed, to drink strong beer, that he might be strong to labor. I endeavored to convince him that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in

proportion to the grain of flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread; and therefore, if he would eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer. He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that muddling liquor; an expense that I was free from. And thus these poor devils keep themselves always under.

Watts, after some weeks, desiring to have me in the composing room, I left the pressmen; a new *bien venu* or sum for drink, being five shillings, ($1.20) was demanded of me by the compositors. I thought it an imposition, as I had paid below; the master thought so too and forbade my paying it. I stood out for two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate, and had so many little pieces of private mischief done me, by mixing my sorts, transposing my pages, breaking my matter, etc., etc., if I were ever so little out of the room, and all ascribed to the chapel ghost, which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted, that notwithstanding the master's protection, I found myself obliged to comply and pay the money, convinced of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually.

I was now on a fair footing with them and soon acquired considerable influence. I proposed some reasonable alterations in their chapel laws, and carried them against all opposition. From my example, a great part of them left their muddling breakfast of beer and bread and cheese, finding they could with me be supplied from a neighboring house with a large porringer of hot-water gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbed with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz., three half-pence (3c). This was a more comfortable as well as cheaper breakfast, and kept their heads clearer. Those who continued sotting with beer all day were often, by not paying, out of credit of the ale house, and used to make interest with me to get beer; their *light*, as they phrased it, *being out*. I watched the pay-table on Saturday night, and collected what I stood engaged for them, having to pay sometimes thirty shillings ($7.20) a week on their accounts. This, and my being esteemed a pretty good sort of a riggite, that is, a jocular verbal satirist, supported my consequence in the society.

My constant attendance (I never making a St. Monday) recommended me to the master; and my uncommon quickness at composing occasioned my being put upon all work of

dispatch which was generally better paid. So I went on very agreeably.

My lodging in Little Britain being too remote, I found another in Duke street, opposite Romish chapel. It was two pair of stairs backwards, at an Italian warehouse. A widow lady kept the house; she had a daughter and a maid servant, and a journeyman who attended the warehouse, but lodged abroad. After sending to inquire my character at the house where I last lodged, she agreed to take me in at the same rate, 3s. 6d. (84c) per week; cheaper she said, from the protection she expected in having a man lodge in the house.

She was a widow, an elderly woman; had been bred a Protestant, being a clergyman's daughter, but was converted to the Catholic religion by her husband, whose memory she much revered; had lived much among people of distinction, and knew a thousand anecdotes of them as far back as the times of Charles the Second. She was lame in her knees with the gout, and, therefore, seldom stirred out of her room, so sometimes wanted company; and hers was so highly amusing to me, that I was sure to spend an evening with her whenever she desired it. Our supper was only half an anchovy each, on a very little strip of bread and

butter, and a half pint of ale between us; but the entertainment was in her conversation.

My always keeping good hours, and giving little trouble in the family, made her unwilling to part with me; so that when I talked of a lodging that I heard of, nearer my business, for two shillings (48c) a week, which, intent as I now was on saving money, made some difference, she bid me not think of it, for she would abate me two shillings a week for the future; so I remained with her for one shilling and sixpence (36c) as long as I remained in London.

Chapter Seven

Franklin Returns to Philadelphia

IN THE garret of her house there lived a maiden lady of seventy in the most retired manner, of whom my landlady gave me this account; that she was a Roman Catholic, had been sent abroad when young and lodged in a nunnery with an intent of becoming a nun; but the country not agreeing with her, she returned to England, where, there being no nunnery, she vowed to lead the life of a nun as near as might be done in those circumstances. Accordingly, she had given all her estate to charitable uses, reserving only twelve pounds ($57.60) a year to live on, and out of this sum she still gave a great deal of charity, living herself on water gruel only, and using no fire to boil it. She had lived many years in that garret, being permitted to remain there gratis by successive Catholic tenants of the house below, as they deemed it a blessing to have her there. A priest visited her to confess her every day.

"I have asked her," said my landlady, "how she, as she lived, could possibly find employment for a confessor?"

"Oh," said she, "it is impossible to avoid vain thoughts."

I was permitted once to visit her. She was cheerful and polite, and conversed politely. The room was clean, but had no other furniture than a mattress, a table with a crucifix and book, a stool which she gave me to sit on, and a picture over the chimney of Saint Veronica displaying her handkerchief, with the miraculous figure of Christ's bleeding face on it, which she explained to me with great seriousness. She looked pale, but was never sick; and I gave it as another instance on how small an income, life and health may be supported.

At Watts's printing house I contracted an acquaintance with an ingenious young man, one Wygate, who, having wealthy relations, had been better educated than most printers; was a tolerable Latinist, spoke French, and loved reading. I taught him and a friend of his to swim at twice going into the river, and they soon became good swimmers. They introduced me to some gentlemen from the country, who went to Chelsea by water to the college and Don Saltero's curiosities. In our return at the request of the company, whose curiosity Wygate had excited, I stripped and leaped into the river, and swam from near Chelsea to Blackfriars, performing on the way many feats of activity, both upon and under water, that surprised and pleased those to whom they were novelties.

I had from a child ever delighted with this exercise, had studied and practiced all Thevenot's motions and positions, added some of my own, aiming at the graceful and easy as well as the useful. All these I took this occasion to exhibit to the company, and was much flattered by their admiration; and Wygate, who was desirous of becoming a master, grew more and more attached to me on that account, as well as from the similarity of our studies. He at length proposed to me travelling all over Europe together, supporting ourselves everywhere by working at our business. I was once inclined to it; but, mentioning it to my good friend, Mr. Denham, with whom I often spent an hour when I had leisure, he dissuaded me from it, advising me to think only of returning to Pennsylvania, which he was now about to do.

I must record one trait of this good man's character. He had formerly been in business at Bristol, but failed in debt to a number of people, compounded and went to America. There, by a close application to business as a merchant, he acquired a plentiful fortune in a few years. Returning to England in the ship with me, he invited all his old creditors to an entertainment, at which he thanked them for the easy composition they had favored him with, and when they expected nothing but the treat, every man at

the first remove found under his plate an order on a banker for the full amount of the unpaid remainder with interest.

He now told me he was about to return to Philadelphia, and should carry over a great quantity of goods in order to open a store there. He proposed to take me over as his clerk, to keep his books, in which he would instruct me, copy his letters, and attend the store. He added, that, as soon as I should be acquainted with mercantile business, he would promote me by sending me with a cargo of flour and bread, etc., to the West Indies, and procure me commissions from others which would be profitable; and if I managed well would establish me handsomely. The thing pleased me; for I was grown tired of London, remembered with pleasure the happy months I had spent in Philadelphia, and wished again to see it; therefore, I immediately agreed on the terms of fifty pounds ($240.00) a year, Pennsylvania money; less, indeed, than my present gettings as a compositor, but affording a better prospect.

I now took leave of printing, as I thought, forever, and was daily employed in my new business, going about with Mr. Denham among the tradesmen to purchase various articles, and seeing them packed up, doing errands, calling upon workmen to dispatch, etc., and when all

was on board, I had a few days' leisure. On one of these days, I was, to my surprise, sent for by a great man I knew only by name, a Sir William Wyndham, and I waited upon him. He had heard by some means or other of my swimming from Chelsea to Blackfriars and of my teaching Wygate and another man to swim in a few hours. He had two sons about to set out on their travels; he wished to have them first taught swimming, and proposed to gratify me handsomely if I would teach them. They were not yet come in town, and my stay was uncertain, so I could not undertake it; but, from the incident, I thought it likely that if I were to remain in England and open a swimming school, I might get a good deal of money.

Thus I spent eighteen months in London; most part of the time I worked hard at my business, and spent but little upon myself except in seeing plays and in books. My friend Ralph had kept me poor; he owed me some twenty-seven pounds ($129.60), which I was never likely to receive; a great sum out of my small earnings. I loved him notwithstanding, for he had many amiable qualities. I had by no means improved my fortune; but I had picked up some very ingenious acquaintances, whose conversation was of great advantage to me; and I had read considerably.

We sailed from Gravesend on the 23rd of July, 1726. For the incidents of the voyage I refer you to my journal, where you will find them all minutely related. Perhaps the most important part of that journal is the plan to be found in it, which I formed at sea, for regulating my future conduct in life. It is the more remarkable, as being formed when I was so young, and yet being pretty faithfully adhered to quite thro' to old age.

We landed in Philadelphia on the 11th of October, where I found sundry alterations. Keith was no longer governor, being superseded by Major Gordon. I met him walking the streets as a common citizen. He seemed a little ashamed at seeing me, but passed without saying anything. I should have been as much ashamed at seeing Miss Read, had not her friends, despairing with reason of my return after the receipt of my letter, persuaded her to marry another, one Rogers, a potter, which was done in my absence. With him, however, she was never happy, and soon parted from him, refusing to cohabit with him or bear his name, it being now said that he had another wife. He was a worthless fellow, tho' an excellent workman, which was the temptation to her friends. He got into debt, ran away in 1727 or 1728, went to the West Indies, and died there.

Keimer had got a better house, a shop well supplied with stationery, plenty of new types, a number of hands, tho' none good, and seemed to have a great deal of business.

Mr. Denham took a store in Water street, where we opened our goods. I attended the business diligently, studied accounts, and grew, in a little time, expert at selling. We lodged and boarded together; he counselled me as a father, having a sincere regard for me. I respected and loved him, and we might have gone on together very happy; but, in the beginning of February, 1727, when I had just passed my twenty-first year, we were both taken ill. My distemper was a pleurisy, which very nearly carried me off. I suffered a good deal, gave up the point in my own mind, and was rather disappointed when I found myself recovering, regretting, in some degree, that I must now some time or other have all that disagreeable work to do over again. I forget what his distemper was; it held him for a long time, and at length carried him off. He left me a small legacy in a nuncupative will, as a token of his kindness for me, and he left me once more to the wide world; for the store was taken into the care of his executors, and my employment under him ended.

My brother-in-law, Holmes, being now in Philadelphia, advised my return to my business;

and Keimer tempted me, with an offer of large wages by the year, to come and take the management of his printing-house, that he might better attend his stationer's shop.

I had heard a bad character of him in London from his wife and friends, and was not fond of having anything more to do with him. I tried for employment as a merchant's clerk; but not readily meeting with any, I closed with Keimer.

I found in his home these hands: Hugh Meredith, a Welsh Pennsylvanian, thirty years of age, bred to country work; honest, sensible, had a great deal of solid observation, was something of a reader, but given to drink. Stephen Potts, a young countryman of full age, uncommon natural parts, and great wit and humor, but a little idle. These he had agreed with at extreme low wages per week, to be raised a shilling every three months, as they would deserve by improving their business; and the expectation of these high wages, to come on hereafter, was what he had drawn them in with.

Meredith was to work at the press, Potts at book-binding, which he, by agreement was to teach them, tho' he knew neither one nor tother. John, a wild young Irishman brought up to no business, whose service for four years Keimer had purchased from the captain of a ship; he, too, was to be made pressman. George Webb,

an Oxford scholar, whose time for four years had been likewise bought, intending him for a compositor, of whom more presently; and David Harry, a country boy, whom he had taken apprentice.

Chapter Eight

Keimer Quarrels With Franklin

I SOON PERCEIVED that the intention of engaging me at wages so much higher than he had been used to give, was, to have these raw, cheap hands formed through me; and as soon as I had instructed them, then they being all articled to him, he should be able to do without me.

I went on, however, very cheerfully, put his printing-house in order, which had been in great confusion and brought his hands by degrees to mind their business and do it better.

It was an odd thing to find an Oxford scholar in the situation of a bought servant. He was not more than eighteen years of age, and gave me this account of himself; that he was born in Gloucester, educated at a grammar-school there, had been distinguished among the scholars for some apparent superiority in performing his part, when they exhibited plays; belonged to the Witty Club there, and had written some pieces in prose and verse, which were printed in the Gloucester newspapers; thence he was sent to Oxford, where he continued about a year, but not well satisfied, wishing of all things to see London, and become a player. At length, receiving his quarterly allowance of fifteen

guineas, instead of discharging his debts, walked out of town, hid his gown in a furze bush, footed it to London, where having no friends to advise him, he fell into bad company, soon spent his guineas, found no means of being introduced among the players, grew necessitous, pawned his clothes and wanted bread. Walking the street very hungry, and not knowing what to do with himself, a crimped bill was put into his hand, offering immediate entertainment and encouragement to such as would bind themselves to serve in America. He went directly, signed the indentures, was put into the ship, and came over, never writing a line to acquaint his friends what was become of him. He was lively, witty, good natured, and a pleasant companion, but idle, thoughtless, and imprudent to the last degree.

John, the Irishman, soon ran away; with the rest I began to live very agreeably, for they all respected me the more, as they found Keimer incapable of instructing them, and that from me they learned something daily. We never worked on Saturday, that being Keimer's Sabbath, so I had two days for reading.

My acquaintance with ingenious people in the town increased. Keimer himself treated me with great civility and apparent regard, and nothing now made me uneasy but my debt to Vernon, which I was yet unable to pay, being

hitherto but a poor economist. He, however, kindly made no demand for it.

Our printing-house often wanted sorts, and there was no letterfounder in America; I had seen types cast at James' in London, but without much attention to the manner; however, I now contrived a mold, made use of the letters we had as puncheons, struck the matrices in lead, and thus supplied in a pretty tolerable way all the deficiencies. I also engraved several things on occasion; I made the ink; I was warehouseman, and everything, and, in short, quite a factotum.

But, however serviceable I might be, I found that my services became every day of less importance, as the other hands improved in the business; and, when Keimer paid my second quarter's wages, he let me know that he felt them too heavy, and thought I should make an abatement. He grew by degrees less civil, put on more of the master, frequently found fault, was captious, and seemed ready for an outbreaking.

I went on, nevertheless, with a good deal of patience, thinking that his encumbered circumstances were partly the cause. At length a trifle snapt our connections; for a great noise happening near the court-house, I put my head out of the window to see what was the matter. Keimer,

being in the street, looked up and saw me, called out to me in a loud voice and angry tone to mind my business, adding some reproachful words, that nettled me the more for their publicity, all the neighbors who were looking out on the same occasion, being witnesses to how I was treated. He came up immediately into the printing-house, continued the quarrel, high words passed on both sides, he gave me the quarter's warning. I told him his wish was unnecessary, for I would leave him that instant; and so taking my hat, walked out of doors, desiring Meredith, whom I saw below, to take care of some things I had left and bring them to my lodgings.

Meredith came accordingly in the evening, when we talked my affair over. He had conceived a great regard for me, and was very unwilling that I should leave the house while he remained in it. He dissuaded me from returning to my native country, which I began to think of; he reminded me that Keimer was in debt for all he possessed; that his creditors began to be uneasy; that he kept his shop miserably, sold often without profit for ready money, and often trusted without keeping accounts; that he must therefore fail, which would make a vacancy I might profit of. I objected my want of money. He then let me know that his father had a high

opinion of me, and, from some discourse that had passed between them, he was sure would advance money to set me up, if I would enter into partnership with him.

"My time," says he, "will be out with Keimer in the spring; by that time we may have our press and types in from London. I am sensible I am no workman; if you like, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish, and we will share the profits equally."

The proposal was agreeable, and I consented; his father was in town and approved it; the more as he saw I had great influence with his son, had prevailed on him to abstain from dram-drinking, and he hoped might break him of that wretched habit entirely, when we came to be so closely connected. I gave an inventory to the father, who carried it to a merchant; the things were sent for, the secret was to be kept till they should arrive, and in the meantime I was to get work, if I could, at the other printing-house.

But I found no vacancy there, and so remained idle a few days, when Keimer, on a prospect of being employed to print some paper money in New Jersey, which would require cuts and various types that I only could supply, and apprehending Bradford might engage me and get the job from him, sent me a very civil message, that old friends should not part for a few words,

the effect of sudden passion, and wishing me to return. Meredith persuaded me to comply, as it would give more opportunity for his improvement under my daily instructions; so I returned, and we went on more smoothly than for some time before.

The New Jersey job was obtained, I contrived a copper-plate press for it, the first that had been seen in the country; I cut several ornaments and checks for the bills. We went together to Burlington, where I executed the whole to satisfaction; and he received so large a sum for the work as to be enabled thereby to keep his head much longer above water.

At Burlington I made an acquaintance with many principal people of the province. Several of them had been appointed by the Assembly, a committee to attend the press, and take care that no more bills were printed than the law directed. They were, therefore, by turns, constantly with us, and generally he who attended, brought with him a friend or two for company. My mind having been much more improved by reading than Keimer's, I suppose it was for that reason my conversation seemed to be more valued. They had me to their homes, introduced me to their friends, and showed me much civility; while he, tho' master, was a little neglected. In truth he was an odd fish; ignorant of common

life, fond of rudely opposing received opinions, slovenly to extreme dirtiness, enthusiastic in some points of religion, and a little knavish withal.

Chapter Nine

Franklin Starts in Business

WE CONTINUED there near three months; and by that time I could reckon among my acquired friends, Judge Allen, Samuel Bustill, the secretary of the Province, Isaac Pearson, Joseph Cooper, and several of the Smiths, members of the Assembly, and Isaac Decow, the surveyor-general. The latter was a shrewd, sagacious old man, who told me that he began for himself when young by wheeling clay for the brick-makers, learned to write after he was of age, carried the chain for surveyors, who taught him surveying, and he had now by his industry, acquired a good estate; and says he, "I can see that you will soon work this man out of his business, and make a fortune in it at Philadelphia."

He had not then the least intimation of my intention to set up there or anywhere. These friends were afterwards of great use to me, as I occasionally was to some of them. They all continued their regard for me as long as they lived.

Before I enter upon my public appearance in business, it may be well to let you know the then state of my mind with regard to my principles and morals, that you may see how far those influenced the future events of my life.

My parents had early given me religious impressions, and brought me through my childhood piously in the dissenting way. But I was scarce fifteen, when, after doubting by turns several points, as I found them disputed in the different books I read, I began to doubt of revelation itself. Some books against Deism fell into my hands; they were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle's lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than refutations; in short, I soon became a Deist. My arguments perverted some others, particularly Collins and Ralph; but each of them having afterwards wronged me greatly without the least compunction, and recollecting Keith's conduct towards me (who was another freethinker), and my own towards Vernon and Miss Read, which at times gave me great trouble, I began to suspect that this doctrine tho' it might be true, was not very useful. My London pamphlet, which had for its motto these lines of Dryden:

> Whatever is, is right. Though purblind man
> Sees but part of the chain, the nearest link;
> His eyes not carrying to the equal beam,
> That poises all above;

and from the attributes of God, his infinite wisdom, goodness and power concluded that nothing could possibly be wrong in the world, and that vice and virtue were empty distinctions, no such things existing, appeared now not so clever a performance as I once thought it; and I doubted whether some error had not insinuated itself unperceived into my argument, so as to infect all that followed, as is common in metaphysical reasonings.

I grew convinced that truth, sincerity and integrity in dealings between man and man were of the utmost importance to the felicity of life; and I formed written resolutions, which still remain in my journal book, to practice them ever while I lived. Revelation had indeed no weight with me, as such; but I entertained an opinion that though certain actions might not be bad because they were forbidden by it, or good because it commanded them, yet probably those actions might be forbidden because they were bad for us, in their own natures, all the circumstances of things being considered. And this persuasion, with the kind hand of Providence, or some guardian angel, or accidental favorable circumstances and situations, or all together, preserved me, thro' this dangerous time of youth, and the hazardous situations I was sometimes in among strangers, remote

from the eye and advice of my father, without any willful gross immorality or injustice that might have been expected from my want of religion. I say willful, because the instances I have mentioned had something of necessity in them, from my youth, inexperience, and the knavery of others. I had therefore a tolerable character to begin the world with; I valued it properly and determined to preserve it.

We had not long returned to Philadelphia before the new types arrived from London. We settled with Keimer and left him by consent before he heard of it. We found a house to hire near the market, and took it. To lessen the rent, which was then about twenty-four pounds a year, tho' I have since known it to rent for seventy, we took in Thomas Godfrey, a glazier, and his family, who were to pay a considerable part of it, and we to board with them. We had scarce opened our letters, and put our press in order, before George House, an acquaintance of mine, brought a countryman to us, whom he had met in the street inquiring for a printer. All our cash was now expended in the variety of particulars we had been obliged to procure, and this countryman's five shillings, being our first fruits, and coming so seasonably, gave me more pleasure than any crown I have since earned;

and the gratitude I felt toward House has made me often more ready than perhaps I should otherwise have been to assist young beginners.

There are croakers in every country, always boding its ruin. Such a one then lived in Philadelphia; a person of note, an elderly man with a wise look and a very grave manner of speaking; his name was Samuel Mickle. This gentleman, a stranger to me, stopt me one day at my door, and asked me if I was the young man who had lately opened a new printing-house. Being answered in the affirmative, he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive undertaking, and the expense would be lost; for Philadelphia was a sinking place, the people already half bankrupt or near being so; all appearances to the contrary, such as new buildings and the rise of rents, being to his certain knowledge fallacious, for they were, in fact, among the things that would soon ruin us. And he gave me such a detail of misfortunes now existing, or that were soon to exist, that he left me half melancholy.

Had I known him before I engaged in this business, probably I never should have done it. This man continued to live in this decaying place, and to declaim the same strain, refusing for many years to buy a house there, because

all was going to destruction; and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have bought it for when he first began croaking.

Chapter Ten

Franklin and the Junto

I SHOULD have mentioned before, that, in the autumn of the preceding year, I had formed most of my ingenious acquaintances into a club of mutual improvement, which we called the Junto; we met on Friday evenings. The rules that I drew up required that every member, in his turn, should produce one or more queries on any point of Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy, to be discussed by the company; and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing, on any subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the direction of a president, and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute, or desire of victory; and to prevent warmth, all expressions of positiveness in opinions, or direct contradiction, were after some time made contraband, and prohibited under small pecuniary penalties.

The first members were Joseph Breintnal, a copyer of deeds for the scriveners, a good-natured, friendly, middle-aged man, a great lover of poetry, reading all he could meet with, and writing some that was tolerable; very ingenious in many little nicknackeries, and of sensible conversation.

Thomas Godfrey, a self-taught mathematician, great in his way, and afterward inventor of what is now known as Hadley's Quadrant. But he knew little out of his way, and was not a pleasing companion; as like most great mathematicians I have met with, he expected universal precision in everything said, or was forever denying or distinguishing upon trifles to the disturbances of all conversation. He soon left us.

Nicholas Scull, a surveyor, afterward surveyor-general, who loved books, and sometimes made a few verses.

William Parsons, bred as a shoemaker, but, loving reading, had acquired such a considerable share of mathematics, which he first studied with a view to astrology, that he afterwards taught at it. He also became sureveyor-general.

William Maugridge, a joiner, almost exquisite mechanic, and a solid, sensible man.

Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, and George Webb I have characterized before.

Robert Grace, a young gentleman of some fortune, generous, lively, and witty; a lover of punning and of his friends.

And William Coleman, then a merchant's clerk, about my age, who had the coolest, clearest head, the best heart and the exactest morals of almost any man I ever met with. He became afterwards a merchant of great note, and one of

our provincial judges. Our friendship continued without interruption to his death, upward of forty years; and the club continued almost as long, and was the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics that then existed in the province; for our queries, which were read the week preceding their discussion, put us upon reading with attention upon the several subjects, that we might speak more to the purpose; and here, too, we acquired better habits of conversation, everything being studied in our rules which might prevent our disgusting each other. From hence the long continuance of the club, which I shall have frequent occasion to speak of hereafter.

But my giving this account of it here is to show something of the interest I had, every one of these exerting themselves in recommending business to us. Breintnal particularly procured us from the Quakers the printing of forty sheets of their history, the rest being to be done by Keimer; and upon this we worked exceedingly hard, for the price was low. I composed of it a sheet a day, and Meredith worked it off at press. It was after eleven at night, and sometimes later, before I had finished my distribution for the next day's work, for the little jobs sent in by our friends now and then put us back. But so determined I was to continue doing a sheet a day

of the folio that one night when having imposed my forms, I thought my day's work over, one of them by accident was broken and two pages reduced to pi, I immediately distributed and composed it over again before I went to bed; and this industry, visible to our neighbors, began to give us character and credit; particularly, I was told, that mention being made of the new printing-house at the Merchants' Every-night club, the general opinion was that it must fail, there being already two printers in the place, Keimer and Bradford; but Dr. Baird (whom I saw many years after at his native place, St. Andrew's in Scotland) gave a contrary opinion: "For the industry of that Franklin," says he, "is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind. I see him still at work when I go home from the club, and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed." This struck the rest, and we soon after had offers from one of them to supply us with stationery; but as yet we did not choose to engage in shop business.

I mention this industry more particularly and the more freely, tho' it seems to be talking in my own praise, that those of my posterity who shall read it may know the use of that virtue, when they see its effects in my favour throughout this relation.

George Webb, who had found a female friend that lent him wherewith to purchase his time of Keimer, now came to offer himself as journeyman to us. We could not then employ him; but I foolishly let him know as a secret that I soon intended to begin a newspaper, and might then have work for him. My hopes of success, as I told him, were founded on this, that the then only newspaper, printed by Bradford, was a paltry thing, wretchedly managed, no way entertaining and yet was profitable to him; I therefore thought a good paper would scarcely fail of good encouragement. I requested Webb not to mention it; but he told it to Keimer, who immediately to be forehanded with me, published proposals for printing one himself on which Webb was to be employed. I resented this; and, to counteract them as I could not begin my paper, I wrote several pieces of entertainment for Bradford's paper, under the title of Busy Body, which Breintnal continued some time. By this means the attention of the public was fixed on that paper, and Keimer's proposals, which he burlesqued and ridiculed were disregarded. He began his paper however, and after carrying it on three-quarters of a year, with at most only ninety subscribers, he offered it to me for a trifle; and I having been ready for some time to go on with it, took it in hand directly;

and it proved in a few years extremely profitable to me.

I perceive that I am apt to speak in the singular number, though our partnership still continued; the reason may be that, in fact, the whole management of the business lay upon me. Meredith was no compositor, a poor pressman, and seldom sober. My friends lamented my connection with him, but I was to make the best of it.

Our first papers made quite a different appearance from any before in the province; a better type, and better printed; but some spirited remarks in my writing, on the dispute then going on between Governor Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, struck the principal people, occasioned the paper and the manager of it to be much talked of, and in a few weeks brought them all to be our subscribers.

Their example was followed by many, and our number went on growing continually. This was one of the first good effects of my having learned a little to scribble; another was, that the leading men, seeing a newspaper now in the hands of one who could also handle a pen, thought it convenient to oblige and encourage me.

Bradford still printed the votes, and laws, and other public business. He had printed an address of the House to the governor, in a coarse, blun-

dering manner; we re-printed it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every member. They were sensible of the difference; it strengthened the hands of our friends in the House, and they voted us their printers for the year ensuing.

Among my friends in the House I must not forget Mr. Hamilton, before mentioned, who was then returned from England and had a seat in it. He interested himself for me strongly in that instance, as he did in many others afterward, continuing his patronage till his death.

Mr. Vernon about that time, put me in mind of the debt I owed him, but did not press me. I wrote him an ingenious letter of acknowledgment, craved his forbearance a little longer, which he allowed me, and as soon as possible I paid the principal with interest, and many thanks; so that erratum was in some degree corrected.

But now another difficulty came upon me which I had never the least reason to expect. Mr. Meredith's father, who was to have paid for our printing-house, according to the expectations given me, was able to advance only one hundred pounds currency, which had been paid; and a hundred more was due to the merchant, who grew impatient and su'd us all. We gave bail, but saw that, if the money could not be raised in time, the suit must soon come to a

judgment and execution, and our hopeful prospects must, with us, be ruined, as the press and letters must be sold for payment, perhaps at half price.

In this distress two true friends, whose kindness I have never forgotten, nor ever will forget while I can remember anything, came to me separately, unknown to each other, and without any application from me, offering each of them to advance me all the money necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself, if that would be practicable; but they did not like my continuing the partnership with Meredith, who, as they said, was often seen drunk in the streets, and playing at low games in ale houses, much to our discredit. These two friends were William Coleman and Robert Grace. I told them I could not propose a separation while any prospect remained for the Merediths fulfilling their part of our agreement, because I thought myself under great obligations to them for what they had done, and would do if they could; but, if they finally failed in their performance, and our partnership should be dissolved, I should then think myself at liberty to accept the assistance of my friends.

Thus the matter rested for some time, when I said to my partner, "Perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in

this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you alone. If that is the case, let me know, and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business."

"No," said he, "my father has really been disappointed, and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him farther. I see this is a business I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was folly in me to come to town, and put myself, at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I am inclined to go with them, and follow my old employment. You may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you; return to my father the one hundred pounds he has advanced, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership, and leave the whole in your hands."

I agreed to this proposal; it was drawn up in writing, signed and sealed immediately. I gave him what he demanded, and he went soon after to Carolina, from whence he sent me next year two long letters, containing the best account that had been given of that country, the climate, the soil, husbandry, etc., for in those matters he was very judicious. I printed them in the papers, and they gave great satisfaction to the public.

Chaper Eleven

A Printer too Poor to Marry

AS SOON as he was gone, I recurred to my friends; and because I would not give an unkind preference to either, I took half of what each had offered and I wanted of one, and half of the other; paid off the company's debts, and went on with the business in my own name, advertising that the partnership was dissolved. I think this was in or about the year 1729.

About this time there was a cry among the people for more paper money, only fifteen thousand pounds being extant in the province, and that soon to be sunk. The wealthy inhabitants opposed any addition, being against all paper currency, from an apprehension that it would depreciate, as it had done in New England, to the prejudice of all creditors.

We had discussed this point in our Junto, where I was on the side of an addition, being persuaded that the first small sum struck in 1723 had done much good by increasing trade, employment, and number of inhabitants in the province, since I now saw all the old houses inhabited, and many new ones building; whereas I remembered well, that when I first walked

about the streets of Philadelphia, eating my roll, I saw most of the houses in Walnut street, between Second and Front streets, with bills on their doors, "To be let;" and many likewise on Chestnut street and other streets, which made me then think the inhabitants of the city were deserting it one after another.

Our debates possessed me so fully of the subject, that I wrote and printed an anonymous pamphlet on it, entitled "The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency."

It was well received by the common people in general; but the rich men disliked it because it increased and strengthened the clamor for more money, and they happening to have no writers among them that were able to answer it, their opposition slackened, and the point was carried by a majority in the House. My friends there, who conceived I had been of some service, thought fit to reward me by employing me in printing the money; a very profitable job and a great help to me. This was another advantage gained by my being able to write.

The utility of this currency became by time and experience so evident as never afterwards to be much disputed; so that it grew soon to be fifty-five thousand pounds, and in 1739 to eighty thousand pounds, since which it arose during war to upwards of three hundred and fifty

thousand pounds, trade, building, and inhabitants, all the while increasing, tho' I now think there are limits beyond which the quantity may be hurtful. I soon after obtained thro' my friend Hamilton, the printing of the New Castle paper money, another profitable job as I then thought it; small things appearing great to those in small circumstances; and these to me were really great advantages as they were great encouragements. He procured for me, also, the printing of the laws and votes of that government which continued in my hands as long as I followed the business.

I now opened a little stationer's shop. I had in it blanks of all sorts, the correctest that ever appeared among us, being assisted in that by my friend Breintnal. I had also paper, parchment, chapmen's books, etc.

One Whitemarsh, a compositor I had known in London, an excellent workman, now came to me and worked with me constantly and diligently; and I took an apprentice, the son of Aquila Rose.

I began now gradually to pay off the debt I was under for the printing-house. In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in reality industrious and frugal but to avoid all appearances to the contrary. I drest plainly; I was seen at no places

of idle diversion. I never went out a-fishing or shooting; a book indeed sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, snug, and gave me no scandal. To show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home paper I purchased at the stores thro' the streets on a wheelbarrow. Thus being esteemed an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and so I went on swimmingly.

In the meantime, Keimer's credit and business declining daily, he was at last forced to sell his printing-house to satisfy his creditors. He went to Barbadoes, and there lived some years in very poor circumstances.

His apprentice, David Harry, whom I had instructed while I worked with him, set up in his place at Philadelphia, having bought his materials. I was at first apprehensive of a powerful rival in Harry, as his friends were very able, and had a good deal of interest. I therefore proposed a partnership to him, which he, fortunately for me, rejected with scorn. He was very proud, dressed like a gentleman, lived expensively, took much diversion and pleasure abroad, ran in debt, and neglected his business; upon which, all business left him; and finding

nothing to do, he followed Keimer to Barbadoes, taking the printing-house with him. There this apprentice employed his former master as a journeyman; they quarreled often; Harry went continually behindhand, and at length was forced to sell his types and return to his country work in Pennsylvania. The person that bought them employed Keimer to use them, but in a few years he died.

There remained now no competitor with me at Philadelphia, but the old one, Bradford, who was rich and easy, did a little printing now and then by straggling hands, but was not very anxious about business. However, as he kept the postoffice, it was imagined he had better opportunities of obtaining news; his paper was thought a better distributor of advertisements than mine, and therefore had many more, which was a profitable thing to him, and a disadvantage to me; for, tho' I did indeed receive and send papers by post, yet the public opinion was otherwise, for what I did send was by bribing the riders, who took them privately, Bradford being unkind enough to forbid it, which occasioned some resentment on my part; and I thought so meanly of him for it that, when I afterward came into his situation, I took care never to imitate it.

I had hitherto continued to board with Godfrey, who lived in part of my house with his wife and children, and had one side of the shop for his glazier's business, tho' he worked little, being always absorbed in his mathematics. Mrs. Godfrey projected a match for me with a relation's daughter, took opportunities of bringing us often together, till a serious courtship on my part ensued, the girl being in herself very deserving. The old folks encouraged me by continued invitations to supper and by leaving us together, till at length it was time to explain. Mrs. Godfrey managed our little treaty. I let her know that I expected as much money with their relation as would pay off my remaining debt for the printing-house, which I believe was then not above a hundred pounds. She brought me word they had no such sum to spare; I said they might mortgage their house in the loan office. The answer to this, after some days, was that they did not approve very much of the match; that, on inquiry of Bradford, they had been informed the printing business was not a profitable one; the types would soon be worn out, and more wanted; that S. Keimer and D. Harry had failed one after another and I should probably soon follow them; and, therefore, I was forbidden the house and the daughter was shut up.

Whether this was a real change of sentiment or only artifice on a supposition of our being engaged in affection to retract, and therefore that we should steal a marriage, which would leave them at liberty to give or withhold what they pleased, I know not; but suspecting the latter, resented it, and went no more. Mrs. Godfrey brought me afterward some more favorable accounts of their disposition, and would have drawn me on again; but I declared absolutely my resolution to have nothing more to do with that family. This was resented by the Godfreys; we differed and they removed, leaving me the whole house, and I resolved to take no more inmates.

But this affair having turned my thoughts to marriage, I looked round me and made overtures of acquaintance in other places; but soon found that, the business of a printer being generally thought a poor one, I was not to expect money with a wife, unless with such a one as I should not otherwise think agreeable. In the meantime that hard-to-be-governed passion of youth hurried me frequently into intrigues with low women that fell in my way, which were attended with some expense and great inconvenience, besides a continual risk to my health by a distemper, which of all things I dreaded, though by great good luck I escaped it.

A friendly correspondence as neighbors and old acquaintances had continued between me and Mrs. Read's family, who all had a regard for me from the time of my first lodging in their house. I was often invited there and consulted in their affairs, wherein I sometimes was of service.

I pitied poor Miss Read's unfortunate situation, for she was generally dejected, seldom cheerful, and avoided company. I considered my giddiness and inconstancy when in London as in a great degree the cause of her unhappiness, tho' the mother was good enough to think the fault more her own than mine, as she had prevented our marrying before I went thither, and persuaded the other match during my absence.

Our mutual affection was revived, and there were no great objections to our union. The match was indeed looked upon as invalid, a preceding wife being said to be living in England, but this could not easily be proved, because of the distance; and tho' there was a report of his death, it was not certain. Then, tho' it should be true, he had left many debts, which his successor might be called upon to pay.

We ventured, however, over all these difficulties, and I took her to wife, September 1, 1730.

None of the inconveniences happened that we had apprehended; she proved a good and faithful helpmate and assisted me much by attending the shop; we throve together, and have ever mutually endeavored to make each other happy. Thus I corrected that great erratum as well as I could.

About this time, at our club meeting, not in a tavern, but in a little room of Mr. Grace's, set apart for that purpose, a proposition was made by me that, since our books were often referred to in our disquisitions upon the queries, it might be convenient to us to have them all together where we met, that upon occasion they might be consulted; and by thus clubbing our books to a common library we should, while we liked to keep them together, have each of us the advantage of using the books of all the other members, which would be nearly as beneficial as if each member owned the whole lot. It was liked and agreed to, and we filled in one end of the room with such books as we could best spare. The number was not so great as we expected; and tho' they had been of great use, yet some inconvenience occurring for want of due care of them, the collection, after about a year, was separated and each took his books home again.

And now I set on foot my first project of a public nature, that for a subscription library. I

drew up the proposals, got them put into form by our great scrivener, Brockden, and, by the help of my friends in the Junto, procured fifty subscribers of forty shillings each to begin with, and ten shillings a year for fifty years, the term our company was to continue. We afterwards obtained a charter, the company being increased to one hundred; this was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It is become a great thing itself, and commonly increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges.

MEM.—*Thus far was written by Franklin at Twyford, Hampshire, England, at the home of Bishop Shipley, and contains several little family anecdotes of no importance to others. The rest of his biography was written many years later in compliance with advice contained in letters, and accordingly intended for the public. The affairs of the Revolution occasioned the interruption.*

The Way To Wealth

Being the Preface to POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC *for* 1758, *by* BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

THE WAY TO WEALTH is very widely known among the writings of Franklin. The "way" has changed little in the past 164 years; hence, it will interest readers to peruse it once more. The preface was written at a period of heavy taxes and poor business, and its homely wisdom is said notably at the time to have promoted cheerfulness, thrift and economy—three conditions which all patriots are seeking to promote. Of the proverbial wisdom of the *Almanac*, and of this preface in particular, Franklin, in his *Autobiography*, says:

"Observing that it (the *Almanac*) was generally read, scarce any neighborhood in the province being without it, I considered it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the

common people, who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces that occur'd between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality, as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, *it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.*

"These proverbs, which contained the wisdom of many ages and nations, I assembl'd and form'd into a connected discourse prefix'd to the Almanac of 1758, as the harangue of a wise old man to the people attending an auction. The bringing all these scattered counsels thus into a focus enabled them to make greater impression. The piece, being universally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the Continent; reprinted in Britain on a broadside, to be stuck up in houses; two translations were made of it in French, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants. In Pennsylvania, as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money which was observable for several years after its publication."

Courteous Reader—I have read that nothing gives an author so great pleasure as to find his works respectfully quoted by others. Judge, then, how much I must have been gratified by an incident I am about to relate to you. I stopped my horse lately where a great number of people were collected at an auction of merchants' goods. The hour of the sale not being come, they were conversing on the badness of the times; and one of the company called to a plain, clean old man with white locks: "Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the times? Will not these heavy taxes quite ruin the country? How shall we ever be able to pay them? What would you advise us to do?" Father Abraham stood up and replied: "If you would have my advice, I will give it you in short; for *A word to the wise is enough*, as Poor Richard says." They joined in desiring him to speak his mind, and gathering round him he proceeded as follows:

"Friends," said he, "the taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them, but we have many others and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly, and from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by

allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice and something may be done for us: *God helps them that help themselves*, as Poor Richard says.

"I. It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one-tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service, but idleness taxes many of us much more: sloth by bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. *Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright*, as Poor Richard says. *But dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of*, as Poor Richard says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that *The sleeping fox catches no poultry*, and that *There will be sleeping enough in the grave.*

"*If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be*, as Poor Richard says, *the greatest prodigality*, since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost time is never found again, and what we call time enough always proves little enough.* Let us then up and be doing, and doing to some purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. *Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all things easy; and He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night;* while *Laziness travels so slowly that Poverty soon overtakes him. Drive*

thy business, let not that drive thee, and *Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise,* as Poor Richard says.

"So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We may make these times better if we bestir ourselves. *Industry need not wish, and he that lives upon hopes will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help hands, for I have no lands;* or if I have they are smartly taxed. *He that hath a trade hath an estate, and he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor,* as Poor Richard says; but then the trade must be worked at and the calling followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious we shall never starve, for *At the working man's house hunger looks in but dares not enter.* Nor will the bailiff nor the constable enter, for *Industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them.* What though you have found no treasure, nor has any rich relation left you a legacy, *Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry. Then plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep.* Work while it is called today, for you know not how much you may be hindered tomorrow. *One today is worth two tomorrows,* as Poor Richard says; and further, *Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do today.* If you were a servant would you not be

ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Are you then your own master? Be ashamed to catch yourself idle when there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, your country, and your king. Handle your tools without mittens; remember that *The cat in gloves catches no mice*, as Poor Richard says. It is true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed, but stick to it steadily and you will see great effects; for *Constant dropping wears away stones:* and *By diligence and patience the mouse ate in two the cable;* and *Little strokes fell great oaks.*

"Methinks I hear some of you say, 'Must a man afford himself no leisure?' I tell thee, my friend, what Poor Richard says: *Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure;* and, *since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.* Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; for *A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things. Many, without labor, would live by their wits only, but they break for want of stock;* whereas industry gives comfort and plenty and respect. *Fly pleasures and they will follow you. The diligent spinner has a large shift;* and *Now I have a sheep and a cow, everybody bids me good morrow.*

"II. But with our industry we must likewise be steady, settled, and careful and oversee our

THE HOME OF THE BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH

Here, in this "sweet retreat," Ben Franklin spent some of the happiest and quietest hours of his eventful life with "good bishop" Shipley, Mrs. Shipley, and their delightful daughters, all of whom were greatly attached to Franklin. In a room of this house at Twyford, Hampshire, still known as Franklin's room, Ben wrote his great Autobiography

own affairs with our own eyes, and not trust too much to others; for, as Poor Richard says:

> I never saw an oft-removed tree,
> Nor yet an oft-removed family,
> That throve so well as those that settled be.

"And again, *Three removes are as bad as a fire;* and again, *Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee;* and again, *If you would have your business done, go; if not, send.*

"And again:

> He that by the plow would thrive,
> Himself must either hold or drive.

"And again, *The eye of the master will do more work than both his hands;* and again, *Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge;* and again, *Not to oversee workmen is to leave them your purse open.* Trusting too much to others' care is the ruin of many; for, *In the affairs of this world men are saved, not by faith, but by the want of it;* but a man's own care is profitable; for, *If you would have a faithful servant, and one that you like, serve yourself. A little neglect may breed great mischief; for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy, all for want of a little care about a horse-shoe nail.*

"III. So much for industry, my friends, and

attention to one's own business; but to these we must add frugality, if we would make our industry more certainly successful. A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose all his life to the grindstone and die not worth a groat at last. *A fat kitchen makes a lean will;* and

> Many estates are spent in the getting,
> Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting,
> And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting.

"*If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as of getting. The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes.*

"Away then with your expensive follies, and you will not then have so much cause to complain of hard times, heavy taxes, and chargeable families; for

> Women and wine, game and deceit,
> Make the wealth small and the want great.

"And further, *What maintains one vice would bring up two children.* You may think, perhaps, that a little tea, or a little punch now and then, diet a little more costly, clothes a little finer, and a little entertainment now and then, can be no great matter; but remember, *Many a little makes a mickle.* Beware of little expenses; *A small leak will sink a great ship,* as Poor Richard says; and

again, *Who dainties love, shall beggars prove;* and, *Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them.*

"Here you are all got together at this sale of fineries and knick-knacks. You call them *goods;* but if you do not take care they will prove *evils* to some of you. You expect they will be sold cheap, and perhaps they may for less than they cost; but if you have no occasion for them they must be dear to you. Remember what Poor Richard says: *Buy what thou hast no need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessaries.* And again, *At a great pennyworth pause awhile.* He means, that perhaps the cheapness is apparent only, and not real; or the bargain, by straitening thee in business, may do thee more harm than good. For in another place he says, *Many have been ruined by buying a good pennyworth.* Again, *It is foolish to lay out money in a purchase of repentance;* and yet this folly is practiced every day at auctions just for want of minding the Almanac. Many a one, for the sake of finery on the back, have gone with a hungry belly and half-starved their families. *Silks and satins, scarlets and velvets, put out the kitchen fire,* as Poor Richard says.

"These are not the necessaries of life; they can scarcely be called conveniences; and yet, only because they look pretty, how many want to have them! By these and other extravagances

the genteel are reduced to poverty and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who, through industry and frugality have maintained their standing; in which case it appears plainly that *A ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees*, as Poor Richard says. Perhaps they have had a small estate left them, which they knew not the getting of; they think, *It is day, and will never be night;* that a little to be spent out of so much is not worth minding; but *Always taking out of the meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom*, as Poor Richard says, and then, *When the well is dry, they know the worth of water.* But this they might have known before, if they had taken his advice. *If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some; for he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing*, as Poor Richard says; and indeed so does he that lends to such people, when he goes to get it again.

"Poor Dick further advises and says,

> Fond pride is sure a very curse;
> Ere fancy you consult, consult your purse.

"And again, *Pride is as loud a beggar as Want, and a great deal more saucy.* When you have bought one fine thing you must buy ten more, that your appearance may be all of a piece; but Poor Dick says, *It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it.* And

it is as truly folly for the poor to ape the rich, as for the frog to swell in order to equal the ox.

> Vessels large may venture more,
> But little boats should keep near shore.

"It is, however, a folly soon punished; for, as Poor Richard says, *Pride that dines on vanity sups on contempt. Pride that breakfasts with Plenty, dined with Poverty, and supped with Infamy.* And after all, of what use is this pride of appearance, for which so much is risked, so much is suffered? It cannot promote health, nor ease pain; it makes no increase of merit in the person; it creates envy; it hastens misfortune.

"But what madness must it be to *run in debt* for these superfluities? We are offered by the terms of the sale six months' credit; and that, perhaps, has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spare the ready money, and hope now to be fine without it. But ah! think what you do when you run in debt; you give to another power over your liberty. If you cannot pay at the time, you will be ashamed to see your creditor; you will be in fear when you speak to him; you will make poor, pitiful, sneaking excuses, and by degrees come to lose your veracity, and sink into base, downright lying; for *The second vice is lying, the first is running in debt*, as Poor Richard says; and again, to the

same purpose, *Lying rides upon Debt's back;* whereas a free-born man ought not to be ashamed nor afraid to see or speak to any man living. But poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue. *It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.*

"What would you think of that prince or of that government who should issue an edict forbidding you to dress like a gentleman or gentlewoman, on pain of imprisonment or servitude? Would you not say that you were free, have a right to dress as you please, and that such an edict would be a breach of your privileges, and such a government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put yourself under such tyranny when you run in debt for such dress! Your creditor has authority, at his pleasure, to deprive you of your liberty by confining you in gaol till you shall be able to pay him. When you have got your bargain you may, perhaps, think little of payment, but as Poor Richard says, *Creditors have better memories than debtors; creditors are a superstitious sect, great observers of set days and times.* The day comes round before you are aware, and the demand is made before you are prepared to satisfy it; or, if you bear your debt in mind, the terms, which at first seemed so long, will, as it lessens, appear extremely short. Time will seem to have added wings to his heels as

well as his shoulders. *Those have a short Lent who owe money to be paid at Easter.* At present, perhaps, you may think yourself in thriving circumstances, and that you can bear a little extravagance without injury, but—

> For age and want save while you may;
> No morning sun lasts a whole day.

"Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever, while you live, expense is constant and certain; and *It is easier to build two chimneys than to keep one in fuel*, as Poor Richard says; so, *Rather go to bed supperless than rise in debt.*

> Get what you can, and what you get hold;
> 'Tis the stone that will turn all your lead into gold.

"And when you have got the Philosopher's stone, sure you will no longer complain of bad times or the difficulty of paying taxes.

"IV. This doctrine, my friends, is reason and wisdom; but, after all, do not depend too much upon your own industry and frugality and prudence, though excellent things, for they may all be blasted, without the blessing of Heaven; therefore ask that blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember Job suffered and was afterwards prosperous.

"And now, to conclude, *Experience keeps a*

dear school, but fools will learn in no other, as Poor Richard says, and scarce in that for it is true, *We may give advice, but we cannot give conduct.* However, remember this, *They that will not be counseled cannot be helped;* and further, that *If you will not hear Reason, she will surely rap your knuckles*, as Poor Richard says."

Thus the old gentleman ended his harangue. The people heard it and approved the doctrine, and immediately practiced the contrary just as if it had been a common sermon; for the auction opened, and they began to buy extravagantly. I found the good man had thoroughly studied my Almanacs, and digested all I had dropped on these topics during the course of twenty-five years. The frequent mention he made of me must have tired anyone else, but my vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious that not a tenth part of the wisdom was my own which he ascribed to me, but rather the gleanings I had made of the sense of all ages and nations. However, I resolved to be the better for the echo of it, and although I had at first determined to buy stuff for a new coat, I went away resolved to wear my old one a little longer. Reader, if thou wilt do the same thy profit will be as great as mine. I am, as ever, thine to serve thee.

Richard Saunders.

BIOGRAPHY
of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

BIOGRAPHY

of

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

By GEORGE E. WRAY

HERE follows a short history of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN insofar as it pertains to his printing experiences other than recorded in

"*My Printing Experiences*"

Biography *of* Benjamin Franklin

EARLY LIFE

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, *Printer*, President of the American Philosophical Society; Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, London and Paris; Governor of the State of Pennsylvania; and Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to the Court of France, was the son of an obscure tallow-chandler and soap-boiler, of Boston, where he was born January 17, 1706, new style.

The Franklins of Chaucer's time were more or less notable men in their several localities. The old poet says:

> This worthy Franklin wore a purse of silk
> Fix'd to his girdle, pure as morning milk;
> Knight of the shire; first justice of the assize;
> To help the poor, the doubtful to advise.
> In all employments, generous just he prov'd;
> Renown'd for courtesy; by all beloved.

Franklin and Professor Hadley of Cambridge wandered to the old village of Ecton, England, where the Franklins had lived poor and humble for countless generations, saw many of the old

people and copied inscriptions on tombstones and parish registers.

Franklin himself somewhat glories in the fact that for 300 years the eldest son of each generation was brought up a blacksmith. It has been said that as the Washington families and the Franklin families were both of Northamptonshire, England, it is more than likely that a Washington horse was oft made sure-footed by a Franklin horse-shoer.

The three uncles of Franklin—all workers—were studiously inclined. Uncle Ben, a silk dyer, was a great collector of sermons and poems, and in him our Ben found a most agreeable companion. Uncle Ben left England, owing to persecutions, and ended his days in Boston with his brother, Josiah, father of young Ben.

Ben's grandfather was one of those who refused to conform to laws affecting conscience. Bloody Mary and her supporters tried such protesters or protestants with fire and fagot, causing them much tribulation. This shrewd believer fastened the family bible to the underside of the lid of a close-stool, and when, while reading the sacred book a priest was seen approaching, the stool was closed and the bible hidden beneath it.

Ben's grandmother played a trick on persecutor Asquith, who boasted that in a certain

little box in his pocket he had a commission to scorch and burn the protestant rogues. Grandma Franklin managed to secure the box, and for the commission to persecute the protestants, she substituted a pack of cards. Asquith attended a council at Coventry, threw the box on the table and out sprang the cards with the knave of clubs uppermost. The protestants of Coventry enjoyed the joke so hugely that they presented Grandma Franklin with a piece of plate that cost fifty pounds, equal, as money now goes, to over a thousand dollars.

Ben Franklin's father, Josiah, married early in England, and owing to the persecution of the presbyterians, the congregationalists or independents of the present day, came to New England in 1682, bringing with him his wife and three children. This wife bore him seven children in all and then died. Josiah then married Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, a writer of some note and to these were born ten more children, of which Ben was the tenth son of Josiah and the fifteenth child. The records in the mayor's office at Boston have these entries:

Benjamin, son of Josiah Franklin and Abiah his wife, 6 January, 1706

Lydia, daughter of Josiah Franklin and Abiah his wife, born 8 August, 1708.

The introduction of the Julian calendar and the overthrow of the erroneous Gregorian calendar changed January 6, old style, to January 17, new style.

Josiah Franklin was a silk dyer, but found little call in New England for his services; so, in order to support his large and continually increasing family he turned soap-boiler and candle-maker.

Ben was born on a Sunday morning and was at once taken by his father over to the South Meeting House and baptized under the name of his paternal uncle Benjamin—he who later came to Boston and encouraged his young nephew in many praiseworthy undertakings. Being the tenth son he was intended by pious Josiah and Abiah as a "tithe" to be devoted to the church, was sent at eight years of age to a grammar school, but Josiah's large family and slumps in the market for the products of the soap-maker and tallow-chandler caused his removal from school to the occupation of twisting candle wicks. This so disgusted Ben that he contemplated running off to sea.

Both father and mother were considerably concerned over Ben, and he was taken to the workshops of coopers, masons, joiners, and other mechanics, but to none of them did youthful Ben manifest desire. Josiah had one son a

FRANKLIN DISCOVERS ELECTRICITY AND
SURPRISES THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD

printer and when Ben was twelve years old, it happened that his brother, James, had just returned from England, whither he had been to buy press, type, and material to conduct a printing office in Boston. So Ben was bound in a nine year apprenticeship to James, without pay, except food and clothes—wages to be paid the last year only of the apprenticeship.

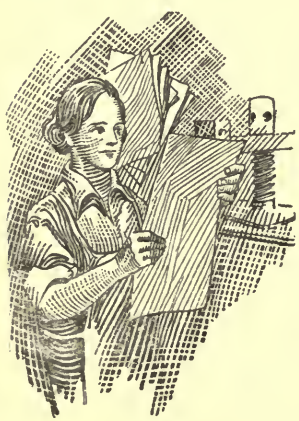
Ben now developed a great taste for reading, devouring everything that came within his reach, making friends with booksellers' boys from whom he surreptitiously borrowed books, and even gaining recognition from tradesmen who had small libraries, and who loaned the boy literature that he could not buy.

Part of his duty was to sell poetical effusions dealing with current tragedies and unusual events. Ben thought he too could compose similar ditties, and urged on by his brother James, he burned midnight candles to scribble what he subsequently called "wretched stuff:"

Come on all you jolly sailors,
You all so stout and brave;
Come hearken and I'll tell you
What happened on the wave.
Oh! 'tis of that bloody Blackbeard
I'm going now for to tell;
And as how by gallant Maynard
He soon was sent to hell—
With a down, down, down derry down.

The Boston of Ben's day thought the boy's poetry "great stuff" and bought it up as fast as it could be run off the handpress. But Ben, getting hold of a volume of Alexander Pope's works quit his poetizing and actually burned up every copy of the Lighthouse Tragedy and Sailor's Song he could get hold of. He also picked up Addison's Spectator and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and became enchanted with the style.

When about 13 he ran across Tryon's work on vegetarianism and became convinced that eating animal food was little short of crime. Knowing the avariciousness of his brother James, he suggested that of the three shillings and sixpence (84c) James paid for Ben's board he give him half the sum (42c) and he would board himself. James took him at his word without hesitancy. Ben now found that out of this (42 cents) he could save twenty cents a week, to be applied in the purchase of books.



Around 1720—or

about 200 years ago—there were few newspapers in North America. The Boston News-Letter was started April 24, 1704;: he Boston Gazette, December 21, 1719; the American Weekly Mercury, Philadelphia, December 22, 1719. James Franklin thought it was time to start a fourth, so on August 21, 1721, he launched the New England Courant, in spite of efforts made by his friends to dissuade him from the venture.

Ben's chief duty seems to have been to deliver the Courant to subscribers and otherwise dispose of them. He had not studied the Spectator in vain, for soon he wrote copy in a disguised hand, slipped it in under the printing office door at night, and awaited results. These were not slow in forthcoming, for he heard his efforts praised even by his brother James. The Dogood Papers include fourteen essays after the Addisonian style, written when Ben was only 15 or 16 years of age.

Then James got into difficulties with the provincial assembly and the House ordered that "James Franklin should not longer print the paper called the 'New England Courant'." From that time on the Courant was published under the name of Benjamin Franklin—the old indentures being cancelled, and new ones drawn up to be held secretly. Differences continued and eventually Ben left. His brother took care

that no other Boston printer would engage him, and hence "Poor Richard" himself was in a sad dilemma.

Ben had not only shared in his brother's disgrace in the eyes of the governing powers, but some of his writings—although he was not yet 17 years of age—had raised the ire of the "unco guid" of Boston; hence by many he was pointed out as an infidel or atheist. To make matters worse his father sided with James, so that a parent's consent to leaving Boston was unthinkable.

Over and over again Ben had shown his ability to keep his own counsel; he trusted only his friend Collins with his secret intention to run away. Collins arranged matters with the captain of a New York sloop. Ben says: "I sold some of my books to raise a little money, was taken on board privately, and as we had a fair wind, in three days I found myself in New York, near 300 miles from home, a boy of but 17, without the least recommendation to, or knowledge of, any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket."

NOTE—*This early history connects here with* "MY PRINTING EXPERIENCES" *as told by Franklin himself; see page 11*

Inventory *of* Franklin's Plant

THERE has been preserved in the Typographic Library and Museum of the American Type Founders Company, of Jersey City, New Jersey, the original "Inventory of the Printing Office of Benjamin Franklin, made by James Parker, taken January 27, 1766."

This was made at the time of the dissolution of the partnership existing between Franklin and Hall. Parker was a printer who had served out his apprenticeship of seven years with William Bradford of New York.

February 27, 1741, articles of agreement were drawn up between Franklin and Parker, the latter having determined to establish himself in Philadelphia. This agreement was originally for six years, but it continued for near five times that period or until Parker died in 1770.

Quantity and Valuation of Ben Franklin's Printing Office, Philadelphia, as taken January 27, 1766 by James Parker

The figures in parentheses were about normal values of exchange, pound sterling, $4.80, in 1914, and have been inserted for the better understanding of the value of Franklin's printing plant.

Lbs.			
383	Old Brevier, much worn, and worth little more than old metal, at 8d. (16c) per lb.	£12:15: 4	($61.28)
282	Newer Brevier—7 years worn, valued at 1s. 3d (30c)	17:12: 6	(84.60)
663	Bourgeois, 8 years worn, valued at 1s.3d.(30c)	41: 8: 9	(198.90)
436	Long Primer, well worn, at 1s.2d. (28c)	25: 8: 8	(122.08)
318	Small Pica, almost worn out, at 10d. (20c)	13: 5: 0	(63.60)
421	Pica, old and much battered, at 10d. (20c)	17:10:10	(84.20)
334	Old English, fit for little more than old metal, at 8½d. (17c)	11:16: 7	(56.78)
502	Newer English, nearly half worn, at 1s.3d (30c)	31: 7: 6	(150.60)
223	Great Primer, well worn, at 1s.2d. (28c)	13: 0: 2	(62.44)
158	Double Pica, pretty good, at 1s.4d. (32c)	10:10: 8	(50.56)
91	Double English Do., at 1s.2d. (28c)	5: 6: 2	(25.40)
70	Flowers at 2s. (48c)	7: 0: 0	(33.68)
53	Figures, planets, space rules, black letter, at 2s.3d. (54c)	5:19: 3	(28.62)
63	Large and title letter, some old, some good, at 1s. (24c)	3: 3: 0	(15.12)
40	Quotations, justifiers, etc., at 1s. (24c)	2: 0: 0	(9.60)
3	Crooked letters, at 1s. (24c)	3: 0	(.72)
85	Cases, some old and shattered, at 5s. ($1.20).	21: 5: 0	(102.00)
13	Frames at 8s. ($1.92)	5: 4: 0	(24.96)
15	Chases, some large, some small, at 6s. ($1.44).	4:10: 0	(21.60)
16	Letter-boards, only 10 of them good for anything	15: 0	(3.60)
3	Folio Galleys, 8 Quarto and 7 Small, do.	1:10: 0	(7.20)
1	Letter rack and one case rack	1: 0: 0	(4.80)
1	Lye trough, 1 lye tub, and one wetting trough	1:10: 0	(7.20)
6	Composing Sticks, one of which good-for-nothing	1:10: 0	(7.20)
2	Imposing Stones, with their stands	3:10: 0	(16.80)

1 Old Book Press, much shattered.....	1: 0: 0	(4.80)
16 Poles for drying paper.....	16: 0	(3.84)
2 Mallets, 2 Shooting Sticks, a Planer and some old furniture.....	1: 0: 0	(4.80)
12 Cuts for Dilworth's spelling books.....	3: 0: 0	(14.40)
2 King's Arms, 3 S's for Bills of Lading, 3 or 4 head and tail pieces.....	2: 0: 0	(9.60)
The cuts for 9 advertisements, much worn..	1: 0: 0	(4.80)
Some brass pieces of rules, and other rules..	12: 7: 0	(3.02)
Three printing presses, one much shattered.	45: 0: 0	(216.00)
	£313:10: 0	($1504.80)

Errors excepted—JAMES PARKER.

Before Franklin went to England to fight the battles for the rights of the colonies he entered into a partnership with his foreman, David Hall, the latter to pay Franklin one thousand pounds a year (about $4800.00) for 18 years, at the end of which time the business was to be Hall's. In the final wind-up Parker represented Franklin and in a letter accompanying the Inventory he says: "The valuation seems smaller than I imagined it would be; the greater part of the letter (type) is much worn, the old brevier fit for very little, and Hall purposes to throw it away. All is worn, except the double pica English and newest English. We weighed the pages of the almanac with all their rules. We weighed the letters in the cases, weighing two empty cases first and taking their weight always out of it.

"One of the presses is almost done its best,

having been mended so often, as to be very patched and mackled."

Franklin seems to have had somewhat of a mania for partnerships, all of which, with one exception, turned out satisfactorily. Some of these are worthy of mention, as they indicate that Franklin was the first American builder of the "trust" or "combine." There is no record that Ben endeavored to control prices, although it is possible that when opportunity offered, the rule would be—"all the traffic will bear."

Other Printing Experiences

BEN FRANKLIN never forgot that he was first, last, and all the time a printer. The printer of his time, however, had to be something more than a mere compositor or pressman, or both; he had to be type designer and artist, typefounder and metalman, color mixer and inkmaker, etcher and engraver, salesman of his product and buyer of raw material and of manufactured goods, retail and manufacturing stationer, advertisement writer and designer, author and compiler, reporter, editor, hack writer and general factotum.

Franklin designed scripts and other type faces, still so perfect that they are considered worthy of being closely followed by modern type designers. He compiled a dictionary in connection with his phonetic alphabet scheme and designed and cast types for the working out of his new language designs. He was the pioneer daylight saver of his time, rising with the sun and retiring with the birds; maintaining that as soon as the sun rose in the east it began to work for the

benefit of the race. He invented logotype prefixes and affixes, with roots of words, for the more speedy composition of type matter. He simplified the printing of music, designed plates for the production of paper money for the Colonies so perfectly that it was all but impossible to counterfeit it, and was withal a dealer in all kinds of commodities—from rags and pills to scientific instruments and Greek text books.

Franklin's adventures in printing and publishing and merchandising did not exhaust his energies by any means. He found time to study astronomy, electricity, harmony of sounds, silk culture, tides and eclipses, gulf streams and the control of angry seas, diseases and their remedies, stove building, home comforts, protection against fire and lightning, the drying of fruits and vegetables, the improvement of printing presses, the paving and lighting of city streets, the building of forts, the raising of war funds among the peace-loving Quakers, the establishment of schools, colleges, hospitals and benefactions, the gift of libraries, and many other things looking towards the advancement of civilization.

Yet all of Franklin's achievements prior to his mission to Great Britain sink into comparative insignificance when his service to the Colonies and to the world at large is considered. Loyal to

the Crown he fought for justice under the Crown on behalf of the subjects of the King of Great Britain in the Colonies. He fought the obnoxious Stamp Act, offered to pay for the shipload of taxed tea thrown overboard into Boston Harbor if Great Britain would repeal the unjust tax. Yet when the stubborn monarch said he would only treat with rebels when they knelt to him for pardon, his patience was exhausted and soon after his flight back to the Colonies said: "Boys, unless we all hang together now, we surely will all hang separately." Revolution was on.

Then came Franklin's mission to France, where he was hailed as the Friend of Man. He persuaded the King of France and his ministers to advance millions of money and thousands of men in order to establish the independence of the United States of America, then in the birth-throes. He enlisted young Lafayette in the cause of freedom and sent him over to aid Washington. The intrepid Paul Jones sought ships vainly from France; he had appealed even to the King himself; he read in Poor Richard that he who wished a thing done might send a message, but that he who would have it done, must needs go himself. Paul went, he won, and made history the United States Marines keep alive to this day. Not till Franklin had signed the release of Cornwallis after his surrender at Yorktown, Virginia,

did our Ben Franklin rest long enough to sing the *Nunc Dimittis*.

Yet in and through it all Franklin had the bitterest of opposition. His own son, for whom he had secured the governorship of the Colony of New Jersey, remained attached to the Crown, thousands of Loyalists went over to Canada—where their descendants are still banded together—while others in high stations goaded Franklin with falsehoods and vile innuendoes. This continued for many years openly, and boldly as well as secretly; even today there are those who, while basking in the sunshine of freedom Franklin spent more than half his life in securing, seem to delight in puny efforts to besmirch one of the greatest characters the world has produced.

Some *of* Franklin's Partnerships

Franklin's partnerships were uniformly successful—with only one exception—owing "to the precaution of having explicitly settled everything to be done by or expected from each partner, so that there was nothing to dispute." He established several brighter apprentices and meritorious assistants in business in various parts of the Colonies.

Franklin and Meredith became partners in 1728, and dissolved in 1730, or nearly three

years. In 1731 Franklin established a partnership with Thomas Whitemarsh, at Charleston, S. C., and in 1732 they founded the *Gazette* there. Later on he formed alliance at Charleston with Peter Timothy, son of Louis Timothee, the former editor of Franklin's German newspaper. With regard to Peter Timothy, his wife and son—Ben Franklin Timothy—he writes:

> I sent one of my journeymen to Charleston and furnished him with a press and letters, on an agreement of partnership, by which I was to receive one-third of the profits of the business, paying one-third of the expense. He was a man of learning, and honest, but ignorant of account; and though he sometimes made me remittances, I could get no account from him, nor any satisfactory statement of our partnership. On his decease, the business was continued by his widow, who not only sent me a clear statement of the transactions past, but continued to account with the greatest regularity and exactness afterwards, and managed the business with such success that she not only brought up reputably a family of children, but was able to purchase the printing-house, and establish her son Ben in it.
>
> The partnership at Carolina having succeeded I was encouraged to engage in others, and to promote several of my workmen by establishing them with printing-houses, in different colonies, on the same terms. Most of them did well, being enabled toward the end of the six-year terms to purchase the plants.

Ben's brother James removed his printing plant from troublous Boston to Newport, R. I., and here Ben paid his older brother a visit. Animosity vanished and the oldest and youngest sons of Josiah and Abiah Franklin were reconciled sufficiently for Ben to take his nephew James, aged ten, back to Philadelphia to put him to school and to teach him the art of printing. His brother James died at Newport, so Franklin sent his nephew back to his mother with such a liberal assortment of types that he could aid the widow in continuing the business. Franklin wrote that "though James is yet young, I hope he has solidity enough to conduct a printing office with prudence and to advantage. If he manages well I will still further encourage him." Besides her son James, Mrs. James Franklin was aided by her two daughters, both "quick and correct compositors at case."

Franklin established Benjamin Mecom, nicknamed Dandy Queer Notions, the son of his sister Jane, in the printing, stationery and bookselling business at Antigua, West Indies, about 1750—having previously established "poor Smith there." The lad got behind with Mr. Strahan of London, and returned to Boston, where he was again set up by his uncle Ben. He was yet again started off in Connecticut, and eventually Ben secured for the son of his favorite sister the postmastership of New Haven.

William Dunlap, who married into Mrs. Deborah Franklin's family, was established by Franklin in the printing business at Lancaster, and later at Philadelphia. He eventually became rector of a Virginia parish through the wide spreading influence of Franklin.

In 1753 Franklin settled Samuel Holland at Lancaster. Later on Hall and Miller were also established here by Franklin. William Smith, in partnership with Franklin, founded the *Freeport Gazette* in 1765. Geo. Armbruester and Franklin were partners from 1747 to 1750; he joined efforts with J. Boehm from 1749 to 1751; and from 1754 to 1758 Franklin and A. Armbruester were linked together in the production of printing. In Kingston, Jamaica, Franklin settled William Daniell, and established other prospective deservants in Georgia, Connecticut and other states.

In 1741 Franklin and James Parker united themselves for six years, the agreement running on till Parker's death in 1770—nearly thirty years. Parker had served his apprenticeship with Bradford in New York, and he continued Bradford's *New York Gazette* as the *Weekly Post Boy*. The plant, furnished by Franklin, consisted of "a printing press with all its necessary appurtenances, with 400 lb. of letters;" but "all charges for paper, inks, balls, tympans, oil,

wool, etc.," two-thirds being charged to Parker and one-third to Franklin, the profits were divided on the same basis.

Franklin's last partnership experience was with Francis Childs, who enlisted Franklin's interest while the latter was Minister to France in 1782. Childs had served an apprenticeship with William Dunlap and had started a small business in New York. The partnership continued until April, 1790, not long before the death of this remarkable partnership builder. Childs was always complaining of shortages from Bache's typefoundry and explaining his shortages of remittances. Ben has left some model dunning letters quite up to date with those of modern bill collectors.

One of Franklin's orders for a partnership plant has been preserved in a letter to his friend and business agent, Wm. Strahan, London, and it runs as follows:

> Bespeak for me of Mr. Caslon: 300lb. long primer with figures and signs sufficient for an almanac; 300lb. pica; 100lb. great primer; 300lb. english; 60lb. double pica; 50lb. two-line english; 40lb. two-line great primer (roman and italic for last three items); 30lb. two-line capitals and flowers; 20lb. quotations. As Mr. Caslon has different long primers, picas, etc., I beg favor of your judgment to choose the best.
>
> To which add—A complete good new press, 2

STATUES of Benjamin Franklin, Printer, adorn every city of note in the country. Greatest of Americans, he started out as a runaway apprentice, leaving Boston for New York and thence on to Philadelphia. This particular bronze statue has been acquired by the Typographic Library and Museum of the American Typefounders Company, Jersey City, New Jersey. It is seven feet high and is the work of Sculptor Plassman; it is shown here by the courtesy of Mr. Henry Lewis Bullen, Jersey City

pairs blankets, 2 pairs ballstocks, some reglets, gutter sticks, side sticks, quoins, etc.; 3 pairs chases, different sizes, the biggest demy; 2 folio galleys, each with four shies; 4 quarto galleys; a few facs (borders for initial letters—W.); head and tail pieces; 2 doz. brass rules; 2 good composing sticks; 2 kegs ink, one weak, one strong. Insure the whole.

Franklin wrote from London to Hall in 1795 that his "prudent conduct in my absence gives me great satisfaction." At this time Franklin was evidently extending the Philadelphia plant for he expresses his "surprise to hear that the new font of bourgeois was not got to hand. I got it ready and paid Caslon for it; it was in two boxes marked B. F. 1, 2. If you think another font of brevier necessary, let me know." Hall having mentioned that many printing offices were being started in Philadelphia, his aging partner replied:

> You are in the right not to be uneasy at the number of printing offices setting up in Philadelphia; the country is increasing and business must increase with it. We are pretty well established, and shall probably, with God's blessing and a prudent conduct, always have our share. The young ones will not be so likely to hurt us as one another.
>
> I much doubt whether I shall be able to send copy for the (Poor Richard) Almanac; I thought I should surely have sent it last year, having collected material, but interruptions disappointed me. If you do not receive it by next packet, shift without it one year more, as you did very well last year, and before another I hope to be home.

Franklin as Typefounder

When Franklin first went to London he readily secured employment with Samuel Palmer, a printer and typefounder, who occupied part of the church of St. Bartholomew. Palmer had visited America, was writing a history of printing, but died before its completion. In connection a typefoundry was conducted by Thomas James in front of St. Bartholomew's Church, and hither Franklin often went until he picked up the secrets of this art. When he returned to Philadelphia to take charge of Keimer's plant, he found that he could utilize his scant knowledge of typefounding to advantage. Here he made molds and cast sorts for Keimer's meager fonts, using the least worn letters for puncheons. Hence Franklin was the first typefounder on the western hemisphere.

Franklin was on friendly terms with William Caslon, the famous London typefounder, whose house flourishes to this day. In 1788 he wrote a letter to Caslon which carries an idea that is evidently almost as old as the hills. Here he figures as an authority on printers' credits:

> I approve very much of your resolution not to send types abroad upon credit. Their excellence will secure sufficient demand without it. Some other British founders have been so extravagantly liberal that way, and thereby created

> such a number of master printers more than the business of the country can maintain, as may probably be hurtful to both the debtors and creditors.

Later Franklin was in correspondence with Baskerville, noted printer and letterfounder of Birmingham, and Franklin advised Baskerville also not to give credit for type and material to aspiring but penurious American printers. Even as late as 1880, 100 years after Franklin and Caslon and Baskerville—it was not uncommon for British typefounders to give a year's credit without interest, and extensions of credit with interest, to struggling printers. And the longer the credit the more prolonged the struggle.

In connection with this idea that *Short reckonings make long friends*, as Poor Richard says, Franklin wrote his son-in-law Bache to deal only "in the ready-money way, though you should sell less. It is the safest and easiest manner of carrying on business."

After Franklin's return from France about 1785, in conjunction with his grandson—Benjamin Franklin Bache—he established a type foundry. Specimen sheets of the product of this foundry may be seen in the Massachusetts Historical Society collection as well as at New Jersey. It was to this grandson Franklin left the type and material he owned at Philadelphia

at his death together with "the complete letter-foundry, which I suppose to be worth near one thousand pounds."

That Franklin cast type while in France is evident from a certificate as to type sent from France to New York. It reads:

> I do certify that the printing types furnished Mr. Francis Childs in fifteen boxes marked B. F. 9, 10, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 38, 53, 54, 59, 60, were made in my house at Passy, and were never the property of any European letterfounder or merchant.

Virginia Seizes Franklin's Plant

One of Franklin's plants in Virginia was commandeered by the state "at the beginning of the troubles" between Great Britain and the Colonies. Richard Bache wrote Franklin in London to set a price thereon, but gave no particulars. Franklin writes from London in 1799:

> Did they take the cases as well as the types? There was a large mahogany press that cost me 25 guineas ($126.00) and a small one that cost me 12 guineas ($60.48). Did they take these? The five cases of money-type you say Congress has taken. I hope they did not take the presses, for I should be unwilling to part with them as they were made under my own inspection with improvements. Also the stone and the chases which may be valued by any printer.

The script letters which the Congress have taken cost me double the price of common letters of the same sizes, the long pica and long primer were £40 ($192.00). Have forgotten what I gave for the larger sort, suppose £10 ($48.00). You may, therefore, settle that.

The law characters cost me £30 ($144.00) and a large font of Greek was valued at £40 ($192.00); about 500lb. long primer at 1s. 6d. (36c) amounted to £39: 10 ($189.00). The law types and the Greek would be of no use to the government so I would be willing to take them back if they are entire. I submit the whole to the honor and equity of the government.

Ben Uses Printers' Terms

When near the close of his life (1784) he wrote entertainingly to William Strahan, London, using printers' expressions as follows:

Let us leave these serious reflections and converse with our usual pleasantry. I remember your observing once to me as we sat together in the House of Commons, that no two journeymen printers, within our knowledge, had met with such success in the world as ourselves. You were then at the *head* of your profession, and soon afterwards became a member of parliament. I was an agent for a few provinces, and now act for them all. But we have risen by different modes. I, as a republican *printer*, always liked a *forme* well *planed* down; being averse to those *overbearing letters* that hold their *heads* so high, as to hinder their neighbors from appearing. You, as a

> monarchist, chose to work upon *crown paper*, and found it profitable, while I worked upon pro patria (often indeed called *foolscap*) with no less advantage. Both our *heaps* hold out very well, and we seem likely to make a pretty *good day's work* of it. With regard to public affairs (to continue in the same style), it seems to me that the *compositors* in your *chapel* do not *cast off their copy* well, not perfectly understanding *imposing;* their *formes* too, are continually pestered by the *outs and doubles*, that are not easy to be corrected. And I think they were wrong in *laying aside* some *faces*, and particularly certain *head-pieces*, that would have been both useful and ornamental. But courage! The *business* may still flourish with good management.

Again, in writing of the maneuvers of those Britishers who were stubbornly determined to keep the Colonies subject to imperial taxation he continues:

> Those places, to speak in our old style (brother type), may be good for the *chapel*, but they are bad for the master, as they create constant quarrels that hinder the *business*. For example, here are two months that your government has been employed in *getting its forme to press;* which it is not yet fit to *work on*, every *page* of it being *squabbled* and the whole ready to *fall into pi*. The *fonts* too are very scanty and strangely *out of sorts*, *comps*. cannot find either *upper or lower case letters* sufficient to *set* the word ADMINISTRATION, but are forced to be continually *turning* for them.

Reformed Spelling

Franklin invented a phonetic alphabet, but only a few of his admirers ever attempted to use it, although he cast types in the expectation that the world would welcome the innovation. In this connection when his sister Jane had asked him to "excuse my bad spelling," he wrote:

> You need not be concerned about spelling, for as our alphabet now stands the bad spelling is generally the best. To give you an instance: A gentleman received a letter and in it were these words—*Not finding Brown at hom I delivered yr mesag to his wf.* He called his lady to help read it but both failed. They called the chambermaid who said: "Why w f spells wife; what else can it spell?" And indeed it is a much better and shorter method than Doubleyou, i, ef, e, which in reality spells *Doublewifey.*

In 1779 Franklin expressed his opinion of the Boston newspapers in a letter from Paris to Boston:

> I thank you for the Boston papers though I see nothing so clearly in them as that your printers do indeed want new letters. They blind me in endeavoring to read them. If you should have any secrets that you wish to be well kept, get them printed in these papers.

Sense Preferable to Sound

When some of the people of Massachusetts named a town in Franklin's honor, they suggested that he give them a bell for the steeple of their meeting house. In 1785 he gave £25 ($120.00) to establish a parish library. He wrote as follows from France to Dr. Price:

> A new town having done me the honor of naming itself after me and proposing to build a steeple to their meeting house if I would give them a bell, I have advised the sparing of the expense of the steeple and that they accept good books such as are apt to inculcate principles of sound religion and just government instead of a bell, sense being preferable to sound.

The dedication of the library was quite an event in Massachusetts. A sermon on the Dignity of Man, from the words "Show Thyself a Man" was delivered and the dedication was in this flowery language:

> To His Excellency BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, President of the State of Pennsylvania; the Ornament of Genius, the Patron of Science, and the Boast of Man. Inscribed with the Greatest Deference, Humility and Gratitude.

Notes

When living in London Franklin conducted the Craven Street Gazette, a humorous affair, for circulation only among his intimate friends. He lived at No. 7. There he received many notables. A tablet on the building reads:

LIVED HERE
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
PRINTER
PHILOSOPHER AND STATESMAN
BORN 1706
DIED 1790

When in Passy, France, Franklin had a printing office there, and conducted it largely for his own pleasure and for the ready production of pamphlets.

When sent to Canada to influence the Canadians to join hands with the Colonies in throwing off the British yoke he took a printing plant and printers to Montreal. His printing press is still on exhibit in the museum there on Rue Notre Dame.

While in London he was engaged to teach swimming to some lordlings; and said, "I think it not impossible to swim from Dover to Calais; the packet-boat, however, is still preferable."

Ben's Department Store

Here is the first mention of fountain pens in America (1742), given in an advertisement from Franklin's *Gazette*. Note that this first American department store carried a great variety of ware, from mezzotints of Preacher Whitefield to "likely young Negroes," and from pewter stands to pills and pounce:

> Just imported from London and to be sold by B. Franklin, at the Post Office, near the Market in Philadelphia: All sorts of fine paper, parchment, inkpowder, sealing wax, wafers, fountain pens, ink and sand glasses with brass heads, pounce, and pounce boxes, curios, large ivory books and common ditto, large and small slates, Gunter's scales, dividers, protracters, pocket compasses, both large and small, fine pewter stands proper for offices and counting houses, fine mezzotints and graded pictures of Mr. Whitefield. Great variety of bibles, testaments, psalters, spelling books, primers, hornbooks, and other sorts of stationery ware.
>
> Very good coffee sold by the printer hereof.
>
> Very good sack at 6s. per gallon. Inquire of the printer hereof.
>
> Two likely young Negroes, one a lad about 19; the other a girl of 15, to be sold. Inquire of the printer.
>
> Ready money for old rags may be had of the printer hereof.
>
> Lampblack made and sold by the printer of the *Gazette*.
>
> Taken out of a Pew in the Church a Common Prayer Book, bound in red, gilt, letters D. F. The person who took it is desired to open it, read the Eighth Commandment, and return it to the same Pew. No further notice will be taken.
>
> The printer has in his hand the Second Volume of Cowley's Works in Octavo, of which he does not know the Owner.
>
> A Parcel of likely Men and Women Servants are to be sold by S. Ferguson at Widow Fox's, Walnut Street, on reasonable terms for Ready Money, Country Produce, or Credit.

Six or seven months ago, was lent by DAVID EVANS, a Barbecuing iron, which he desires may be returned, he having forgot to whom he lent it.

Between the second and third Sundays in June past, there was stolen three Bibles out of the Baptist Meeting House. Whoever gives notice of the said Bibles, and secures them so that they may be had again, shall have Fifteen Shillings reward at the printer's.

A likely young breeding Negro Woman fit for town or country business, has had the small pox; also a mill for grinding Malt, and a Screen for cleaning of Malt or any other grain; inquire of JOHN DANBY in Third Street, and know the Price; they will be sold very reasonable for Ready Money.

STOLEN *or* STRAYED, out of Benjamin Franklin's pasture near Philadelphia, a young Sorrel Horse, 14 hands, Silver Mane and Tail, four white feet, Blaze in his Face, no Brand, a large Belly, and shod all around. Also a small Bay Horse without shoes, low in Flesh, long Dark Tail and Mane. Whoever brings them to B. F., shall have 40s. for the first and 10s. for the other. If stolen and the Thief brought to Justice, Five Pounds, with reasonable charges paid by B. Franklin.

Widow Read, removed from the upper end of High Street, to the New Printing Office, near the Market, continues to make and sell her well-known Ointment for the Itch, with which she has cured abundance of People in and about the City of Philadelphia for a number of years. It is always effectual for the purpose, and never fails to perform the Cure speedily. It kills or drives away all Sorts of Lice in once or twice using. Price 2s. (48c) a gallypot ounce. Also her Family Salve for Burns and Scalds. 1s. (24c) an ounce. Also Lockyer's Pills, at 3d. (6c) a pill.

A Stickler for Correctness

Speaking of printers' errors Franklin has this to say:

> In my last, a few faults escaped; some belong to the author, but most to the printer: let each take his share of the blame, confess, and amend for the future. Printers indeed should be very careful how they omit a figure or letter; for by such means sometimes a terrible alteration is made in the sense. I have heard, that once, in a new edition of the Common Prayer, the following sentence, "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," by an omission of a single letter, became, "We shall all be hanged in a moment, etc.," to the no small surprise of the first congregation it was read to.

To show the value of a comma Franklin tells the story of the country minister who was handed a crudely written notice to read in the meeting house:

> A man going to sea his wife desires the prayers of the congregation.
>
> The preacher placed the comma pause after the word "wife" instead of pausing after the word "sea."
>
> Finding that his audience smiled audibly, the divine made still another attempt, and this time he made a comma pause after "man" and another after "wife." This was too much for the sober congregation.

"Follow Copy"

Franklin felt strongly upon the matter of the misuse of capitals and italics. He sent copy to the printer and asked him to take care that the printers observed strictly "the italicking, capitalling and pointing." He told his son that his "Edict of the King of Prussia" had been reprinted "stripped of all the capitalling and italicking that intimate the allusions and mark the emphasis of written discourses, to bring them as near as possible to those spoken. Printing such a piece all in one even small character seems to me like repeating one of Whitefield's sermons in the monotony of a school boy."

Logotype Printing

John Walter, founder of the London *Times*, sought Franklin's interest in Johnson's system of logotypes by which whole words or prefixes and affixes were used in printing. Franklin wrote in 1784 from Passy, France:

> So far as I understand the system I am much pleased with it. I do not perfectly comprehend the arrangement of cases, but the reduction of the number of pieces in roots of words and their terminations is extremely ingenious. I like the idea of cementing the letters, which I formerly attempted and I invented a mold and method by which I could, in a few minutes, form

a matrice of any word in any font at pleasure and cast from it.

I send specimen of some of my own terminations and I would willingly instruct Mr. Henry Johnson in the method, but he has a better. Madame De St. Paul invented a new system of typography here and the King of France has borne the expense of the experiments. Madame's method is said to reduce the work of setting the type one-half, whereas Johnson's method lessens it three-fourths.

Printer's "Phat"

Franklin had a decided objection to the "phatting out" of type matter with slugs and white lines. In his recorded orders on Caslon or Baskerville he never requests that great aid to modern composition—leads. What the ad. writers of to-day know as "white space," was not dreamed of by Our Ben. When he was 79, he wrote:

> One can scarce see a new book without observing the excessive artifices used to puff up a paper of verses into a pamphlet, a pamphlet into an octavo, an octavo into a quarto, with scabboardings, white lines, sparse titles, exorbitant margins, to such a degree that the selling of paper seems now to be the object, and printing only a pretense. You have a law against butchers' blowing of veal to make it look fatter; why not one against the blowing of books to make them look bigger.

Holding Over Objectionable Copy

Franklin gave no end of good advice useful to reporters, writers and editors of the present day. With regard to attacks upon the characters of more or less prominent men, he invariably refused to countenance or aid them. To one correspondent he wrote in 1786, returning the objectionable copy with such tactful expressions of goodwill that none could take offense:

> Do not publish the piece immediately; let it lie by you at least a twelvemonth; then reconsider it and do what you find proper. You both have children, and the animosity may be entailed to the prejudice of both sides. With great esteem and affection, I am, etc.

Printer to the End

When Franklin was 83 years old he wrote to one of his young lady correspondents as follows:

> I am too old to follow printing again myself, but loving the business I have brought up my grandson Ben to it and have built and furnished a printing-house for him, which he now manages under my eye.

When he wrote his will in the closing days of his life it began: "I, Benjamin Franklin, of Philadelphia, Printer, late Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America to the Court of France," etc.

Franklin statues have been erected in most of the large cities of America, and his bust has a place in the decoration of school houses and other public buildings generally throughout the land.

Towns and counties innumerable have been named after Franklin (there are said to be twenty places in Ohio alone named Franklin) and every year in every important American city his birthday is celebrated by meetings and banquets of members of societies of advertising men, publishers, and printers. Printers claim him as their own by the statement that he is their "patron saint." His fine statue in Washington bears the legend:

BEN FRANKLIN

PRINTER

Franklin's Pennsylvania Activities

IN 1737, Colonel Spotswood, former governor of Virginia, and then postmaster-general, being dissatisfied with the conduct of his deputy at Philadelphia, respecting negligence and inexactitude of accounts, took from him the commission and offered it to Franklin. The latter accepted it readily, and found it of considerable advantage; for although the salary was small, it facilitated the correspondence that improved his newspaper, increased its circulation and boomed his advertising patronage, so that it came to afford him considerable income. His former competitor's newspaper declined proportionately. In this connection Franklin says:

> I mention these things as a lesson to those young men who may be employed in managing affairs for others, that they should always render accounts, and make remittances, with great clearness and punctuality.

Franklin was instrumental in the establishment of a large hall for the use of any preacher

of any religious persuasion who might desire to say something to the people of Philadelphia; "so that even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mohammedanism he would find a pulpit at his service."

When Whitefield the preacher arrived at Boston from England, he wrote Franklin, asking possibilities as to lodging, Franklin replied: "You know my house; if you can make shift with its scanty accommodations, you will be most heartily welcome." Whitefield replied that if Franklin made that kind offer for Christ's sake, he should not miss of a reward. Franklin replied: "Don't let me be mistaken; it was not for Christ's sake, but for your sake." Whitefield accepted.

In 1736 he was elected clerk of the Assembly and held the clerkship for fifteen years. In 1747 he organized the militia under the name of "associators;" no easy matter in Quaker Pennsylvania. When the Quaker Assembly of Pennsylvania was urged by Governor Thomas to buy powder the men of peace declined, because powder was an ingredient for warfare, but Franklin suggested that three thousand pounds be appropriated for the "purchase of bread, flour, wheat, or other grain." The "other grain" in this case was gunpowder.

In 1752 Franklin was elected a member of the

Assembly. He was also made a justice of the peace and a member of the city councils. During the war between the English and French, each upholding their claims to American soil, Franklin was sent to Braddock's headquarters in Virginia to see how Braddock could be aided. Here it was that he first met George Washington. Franklin was commissioned to buy horses and wagons. He readily gave his guarantee and this almost ruined him, as the government was exceedingly slow refunding his advances.

While Washington could swear on occasion "like an angel of God," there are no swearing stories recorded of Franklin. The spirit of ease and contentment had been a family trait for many generations. Nevertheless, some of his early humorous writings border on coarseness, quite in harmony with the English writers of Franklin's time.

When Braddock was defeated in 1755 the "associators" were called upon to go to the rescue and elected Franklin colonel of their regiment. So it happened that the philosopher who had never used a gun, became a war leader. He built a line of forts in the Lehigh Valley and checked the Indian warriors. His love of humor is exemplified in his suggestion to the chaplain that if he would accept the position of "steward of the rum," and make a point of distributing it

immediately after morning prayers he would have the soldiers all about him. "Never were prayers more punctually attended," he naively observes.

Franklin urged the formation of a local military company for the protection of Philadelphia. They bought some old cannon from Boston, secured more from England, and Franklin went to New York to borrow cannon from Governor Clinton. Clinton refused, but he softened under madeira to the loan of six cannons. After a few more bumpers, he advanced to ten; and at length he good-naturedly conceded eighteen. The associators kept nightly guard while the war lasted, and Franklin took his turn of duty as a common soldier.

Franklin said that it was his rule "never to ask, never refuse, or never resign an office." This was after he had resigned from the office of Justice of the Peace.

While it may be true in the main that Franklin never asked for an office, he was not at all slow in seeking public office for his relations, about a dozen of whom were given positions of public trust through his influence. This was the custom of the times and no one really objected in his day to such nepotism.

Other offices held by Franklin were:

Clerk Pennsylvania Assembly.
Member Philadelphia Council and Alderman.
Postmaster of Philadelphia.
Deputy Postmaster General for the Colonies.
Postmaster General for the Colonies.
Delegate to Albany convention to consider plans for a union of the Colonies.
Colonel, Pennsylvania Militia.
Acting General, Pennsylvania Militia.
President Pennsylvania Commission of Safety.
Commissioner to Continental Army at Cambridge.
Commissioner to Canada.
Agent in England for the Colonies (16 years.)
Member Secret Committee of Correspondence.
Member to draft Declaration of Independence.
Member Continental Congress.
President Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention.
United States Commissioner to France.
United States Minister Plenipotentiary to France.
United States Commissioner to Negotiate Peace with Great Britain.
President (Governor) of Pennsylvania.

Equally important with the holding of public office was Franklin's service of an unofficial kind. The more important of these achievements were as follows:

Founded the American Philosophical Society (First President).
Founded the Philadelphia Library, upon which is based all public library systems.
Founded the University of Pennsylvania.
Founded the Philadelphia Fire Company.
Helped to found the Philadelphia Hospital.

In 1753 Franklin received the honorary degree of Master of Arts from Harvard and Yale.

Franklin entered heartily into the project of establishing a hospital for the colony in Philadelphia and inserted in his newspaper, a series of essays, "on the great duty of charity to the sick and miserable," which made such an impression on the public mind, that $12,000.00 was quickly subscribed. On the foundation stone is to be seen the following inscription by Franklin:

IN THE YEAR OF CHRIST MDCCLV
GEORGE THE SECOND, HAPPILY REIGNING
(FOR HE SOUGHT THE HAPPINESS OF HIS PEOPLE)
PHILADELPHIA FLOURISHING
(FOR ITS INHABITANTS WERE PUBLIC SPIRITED)
THIS BUILDING
BY THE BOUNTY OF THE GOVERNMENT
AND OF MANY PRIVATE PERSONS
WAS PIOUSLY FOUNDED
FOR THE RELIEF OF THE SICK AND MISERABLE

MAY THE GOD OF MERCIES BLESS
THE UNDERTAKING

Scientific and Mechanical Experiments

FRANKLIN could make an experiment with less apparatus and conduct his experimental inquiries to a discovery with more ordinary materials than any other philosopher. To a common kite, made of silk, rather than paper, because of the rain, he fixed a slender iron point. Then with an old key, a silk thread, and some sealing wax he discovered the identity of lightning and electricity. He clapped his knuckles to the key, and felt a smart shock! He charged a bottle with this strange visitor, and exploded gunpowder, set spirits of wine on fire, and verified the oneness of electrical fluid and lightning.

The experiments with electricity and the letters to Collinson of London describing them, brought Franklin into some prominence, and about this time we find him writing the first lengthy intelligent explanation of the Leyden jar, his explanation of thunder and lightning as

phenomena of electricity. In July, 1750, Franklin sent to London a paper announcing the invention of the lightning rod, together with an explanation of its action.

Franklin's suggestions as to "drawing the lightning from the clouds" were carried out in France and England and thus the Philadelphia printer, philosopher, postmaster, and author of "Poor Richard" became famous.

Franklin founded a public library, whereby, at a small expense, a subscriber might have his choice of books, on all subjects whether of pleasure or profit. This library, which was commenced in 1731, by Franklin, with only thirty-seven members, and one hundred volumes, became in 1820, enlarged to six hundred members, and upwards of twenty thousand volumes. It is today well-nigh the largest library on this continent.

He invented the Franklin stove, and in 1745 he published a complete description of it, one of the most interesting essays ever written on a dry and uninteresting subject.

Franklin refused to take out a patent for any of his inventions; for he was on principle opposed to patents, and said that as we enjoyed great advantages from the inventions of others we should be willing to serve them by inventions of our own, freely and generously. A London ironmonger made a few changes in the Pennsylvania

Fireplace and sold it as his own, gaining a fortune.

When Governor of Pennsylvania, after the Revolution, he is said to have declined to receive any salary for his three years' service, accepting only his expenses for postage, which was high in those times, and amounted in this case to seventy-seven pounds. This is not literally true; he did not decline to receive his salary, but he spent it in charity, and made bequests of it in his will.

Franklin also introduced the basket willow and broom corn; street paving, cleaning, and lighting; reformed the night watch of his adopted city; promoted the use of plaster and mineral fertilizers; urged the culture of grapes and silk; advocated the building of ships with water tight compartments; and lent a hand—literally—in all kinds of progressive work.

Franklin studied the effect of oil in stilling troubled waters; he wrote on light, heat, the vis inertiæ of matter, magnetism, rainfall, evaporation and the aurora borealis. No subject was too great or too insignificant for his pen; he revised the English Prayer Book, continually quoted scripture, was an avowed freethinker, vegetarian, church-goer and meat eater by turns; he wrote on astronomy and colds, sex problems and clean streets, atheism and deism,

paper money and printers' credits, mutual insurance and night watchmen, multiplying the human race and replenishing the earth, the effects of luxury and idleness, industry, slavery, peace, war, health, sickness, thrift, love, business, agriculture, independence; ever ready with caution and advice on marriage, travel, friendship, trade, and other problems put up to him for solution.

Franklin had somewhat of a love for music and could play the violin, the harp and the guitar. He constructed a musical machine with revolving glasses operated with the foot; the glasses when touched with wet fingers emitting tones "incomparably sweet."

Franklin has been considered quite an authority on the peopling of the earth, national wealth, the price of corn, free trade, slavery and the slave trade, on the art of peace and the shame and disgrace of war. He preceded Sherman in the idea that war is hell. "You blundering blockhead," he puts into the mouth of a visiting angel from heaven to earth to its guide: "You undertook to conduct me to earth, but these mangled bodies on this battlefield show that you have brought me into hell itself." He brought about the organization of the parent volunteer fire department, and originated in 1743 what became the American Philosophical Society, which still exists.

Other of his inventions were: a chair which when turned inside out became a step-ladder: bifocal lenses, now becoming exceedingly common, besides many improvements in printing, boating and other activities.

Nothing seemed to be too small or too great for Franklin. He invented an apparatus for taking books from high shelves. He suggested that sailors could mitigate thirst by sitting in the salt water or soaking their clothes in it. He said that the pores of the skin, while large enough to admit the water, are too small to allow the salt to penetrate; and the experiment was successfully tried by shipwrecked crews.

He maintained that bread and flour could be preserved for years in air-tight bottles; this was proved successful by Captain Cook in his famous voyage.

The Later Life *of* Franklin

AN EARLY RETIREMENT

FRANKLIN retired from printing activities at the early age of forty-two, and became more or less of a silent partner in the firm of Franklin and Hall and other concerns. Hitherto he had been a hard, diligent worker; his pleasures had been books, the Junto, the theater, and some love affairs.

In 1740 Franklin's business was continually augmenting, and his circumstances growing daily easier, his newspaper having become profitable, as being for a time almost the only one in the neighboring provinces. "I experienced too," he says, "the truth of the observation that after getting the first hundred pounds, it is more easy to get the second; money itself being of a prolific nature."

At the time Franklin established himself in Pennsylvania, there was not a good bookshop south of Boston. In New York and Philadelphia the printers carried stationery, ballads, almanacs, and a few school books. Book readers were

compelled to send to England for literature. Franklin imported books and hazarded their profitable sale.

Franklin carefully excluded, in conducting his newspapers, all libelling and personal abuse, which had become somewhat disgraceful even for those days. Whenever writers pleaded the liberty of the press—that a newspaper was like a stagecoach, in which anyone who would pay had a right to a place—he would offer to print copies separately if desired, maintaining that he had contracted with his subscribers to furnish them with useful or entertaining matter, hence he could not fill their papers with private altercation. On this subject, he writes:

> Many of our printers make no scruple of gratifying the malice of individuals by false accusations of the fairest characters among ourselves, augmenting animosity even to the producing of duels; and are, moreover, so indiscreet as to print scurrilous reflections on the government of neighboring states, and even on the conduct of our best national allies, which may be attended with the most pernicious consequences. These things I mention as a caution to young printers, and that they may be encouraged not to pollute their presses and disgrace their profession by such infamous practices.

How much money Franklin actually made in his business is difficult to determine, although

many guesses have been made. He was more largely and widely engaged than any other printer in the colonies, for nearly all the important printing of the middle Colonies and a large part of that of the southern Colonies came to his office in Philadelphia. He made enough to retire after working for himself only about twenty years.

On retiring he turned over his printing and publishing interest to his foreman, David Hall, who was to carry on the business in his own way under the firm name of Franklin and Hall, and to pay Franklin a thousand pounds a year ($4,800.00) for eighteen years, at the end of which time Hall was to become sole proprietor. It is probable that this thousand pounds which Franklin was to receive is an indication that the business had been yielding him more than that sum, possibly, almost two thousand pounds ($10,000.00) a year. However this is very uncertain. It will be remembered that Parker valued this plant at less than one-third the sum Hall paid per annum for eighteen years; hence the goodwill as appraised by Hall must have been held at an enormously high value; for these eighteen years at least the business was generally known as Franklin's, although conducted by Hall. After Franklin retired in 1748 he never again engaged himself in gainful trade, except that he was ever ready to turn an honest penny.

On one occasion he wrote his "dear child Debby," that as the income from Hall had ceased, they must needs be somewhat more economical. To a young lady about to be married he wrote:

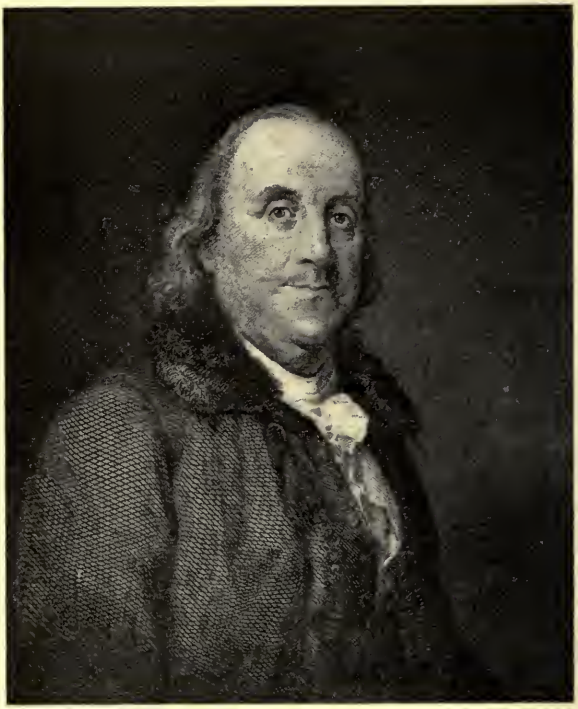
> Frugality is an enriching virtue—a virtue I never could acquire in myself; but I was once lucky enough to find it in a wife, who thereby became a fortune to me.

Until he went abroad he wore clothes of his own wife's making and was extremely frugal in all his habits.

While Franklin had, on the whole, abundant reason to be satisfied with being established in Pennsylvania, there were two things that he regretted, there being no provision for defense, nor for a complete education of youth; neither militia, nor college. In 1743, he drew up a proposal for establishing an academy; and the next year he succeeded in proposing and establishing the Philosophical Society, which has since become and now is a national institution.

After his withdrawal from business Franklin remained postmaster of Philadelphia, and in 1753, after he had held that office for sixteen years, he was appointed Postmaster-general of all the Colonies. This position he retained until dismissed from it by the British government in 1774, on the eve of the Revolution. This was a

sad blow to Franklin's pride as may be seen in his letter to his wife and daughter. There was some salary attached to these offices, that of Postmaster-general yielding three hundred pounds. The postmastership of Philadelphia entailed no difficult duties, and his wife assisted him; but when he was made Postmaster-general he made extensive journeys through the Colonies, reformed the postal system, and well earned every penny of his salary—long delayed in payment. This salary was allowed only as the office produced it; it was withheld four years. Franklin had installed faster post-riders, increased the transportation of mail between important places, made a charge for carrying all newspapers, regardless of who published them—hitherto carried free when published by postmasters—and insisted that all newspapers should be carried on the same terms, his own and his competitor's included. He also reduced some of the postage rates.



BON HOMME RICHARD

THE FRENCH CALLED FRANKLIN THE GOOD MAN RICHARD IN HONORING THE AUTHOR OF POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC

Dodson's Engraving of the Longacre-Duane Painting, cir. 1835

Franklin Becomes a Diplomat

FRANKLIN'S diplomatic career did not really begin until about 1756-7, when he was over 50 years of age. A royalist, he looked upon the King of Great Britain as the supreme ruler of all the British Colonies, hoping even against hope for a friendly settlement of all the difficulties existing and growing between the mother country and his native land. Not until actual blood was shed at Lexington did Franklin weaken in his allegiance. As late as 1758 he wrote: "A firm loyalty to the Crown, and a faithful adherence to the government of this (British) nation, which it is the safety as well as honor of the Colonies to be connected with, will be the wisest course for us to take."

In 1757 Franklin became a Minister to England, where only comparatively a few years before he had worked as a journeyman printer. He left London with Mr. Denham, a poor, obscure boy; he returned as a man of science and distinction, retired from manual labor and business

on a fair income, and in the service of his country.

In 1764 began the agitation for the Stamp Act; he opposed it vigorously, but when it was passed he quit his opposition and sent stamps to his Philadelphia store for sale. He recommended Hughes as agent; Hughes' house was mobbed. Franklin still wrote that they must have "a firm loyalty to the Crown and a faithful adherence to the government." The mob threatened his wife but she refused to flee to safety. Eventually the Stamp Act was repealed through the efforts of London merchants who wanted American business. Franklin assisted materially, was publicly thanked and re-appointed by Pennsylvania as London agent. Georgia, New Jersey and Massachusetts followed, and soon Franklin was a kind of Colonial ambassador. He wrote articles and pamphlets to place the cause of the Colonies before the English. He associated with friendly leaders; but could not prevent troops being quartered on Boston.

Franklin returned from England in 1775, and was made deputy in the Continental Congress. He was made postmaster-general of the Colonies, laid lines of postal communication from Maine to Georgia, and became earnest for the war. "B free Franklin" was his humorous way of franking his mail, instead of "Free. B. Franklin." He gradually absorbed the spirit of independence and joined hands in throwing off the British yoke.

Franklin's Mission to France

IN 1776 Franklin was given a commission to represent the United Colonies—now being newly-born as the United States of America—in France. He said: "I am old and good for nothing; but as the storekeepers say of their remnant of cloth, I am but a fag end, you may have me for what you please." The "fag end" of his life extended to fourteen years of strenuous labor for liberty, and to make the United States of America safe for democracy.

Franklin discovered the heart of France. His reception was most enthusiastic; his name was already a household word there; his discovery of the nature of lightning appealed strongly to the French imagination; Poor Richard, long since translated into several European languages, had visited well-nigh every home in France; his shrewd thriftiness and homely wisdom had been the delight of the gay home-loving French. They almost worshipped its author as the very personification of the Liberty they were already beginning to yearn for, for the

French Revolution—with its Liberty, Fraternity, Equality—was even then being conceived in the womb of Time.

Within a year Franklin and Beaumarchais caused to be sent to America eight vessels, with supplies worth six million francs; they influenced the French to be eager to aid the American revolutionists.

To the chagrin of Adams, Lee and others, the French believed that Franklin originated the revolt, that he was the Solon who could lay down laws for the revolutionists, and that he was directing their movements. From the highest to the lowest, the French showered honors on him as the good wily old patriarch in his marten fur cap—see frontispiece—appeared among them in both their gay and solemn festivities.

In the babyhood of America's diplomatic service diverse were the functions of this ambassador. Franklin was fiscal agent, merchant, banker, consul, judge of admiralty, director of the American navy, negotiator with England for exchange of prisoners, for parleys, and for peace.

Alone and unaided Franklin persuaded the French government to lend millions of money and then to lend more money to pay interest on that already advanced. America seemed to regard him as the source from which all needed funds were to come. Congress drew on him,

other diplomats drew on him, he paid salaries, met innumerable expenses for fitting out and repairing ships, and for the exchange of prisoners. Invariably he met all calls for help, whether from Congress, individual states, or individuals.

Commodore Paul Jones, the intrepid American, and other captains of our navy who were cruising against British commerce in European water had headquarters in France, and were under the direction of Franklin. Within three months in British waters they took thirty-seven prizes, and seventy-five prize ships within the year. Franklin acted as a court of admiralty regarding prizes and cargoes, settled disputes between officers and men, quieted discontent about pay by advancing money, decided the fate of mutineers, and had ships refitted and repaired.

Franklin maintained the doctrine of "free ships, free goods;" he wrote: "Whatever may formerly have been the law of nations, all the neutral powers seem disposed to enforce the rule that free ships shall make free goods, except in the case of contraband. Denmark, Sweden, and Holland have already acceded to the proposition and Portugal is expected to follow. France and Spain, in their answers, have also expressed their approbation of it. I have, therefore, instructed our privateers to bring in no more neutral ships, as such prizes occasion much litigation, and create ill blood."

In carrying on the negotiations, Franklin insisted on most of the terms afterwards agreed upon: first, complete independence, the right to fish on the Newfoundland Banks and a settlement of boundaries; he added a point not afterwards pressed—that Canada should be ceded. In exchange for Canada he was prepared to allow some compensation to the Tories for their loss of property. The question of Canada was dropped entirely and the descendants of the Tories of 1776 keep up their bitter toryism to this day.

Franklin eventually left France in great triumph, but worn out with arduous labor, much bickering, a complication of physical troubles and much pain. The king honored him greatly, while the people flocked about him with joyfulness and admiration in his journey from Paris to the sea. In England he was honored beyond expectation and eventually landed in Philadelphia in 1786. He was next made President (Governor) of Pennsylvania.

Franklin laid the plan of representation so that in the lower House the representation should be according to population, in the Senate each State to have an equal vote, money bills to originate in the lower House. His plan was substantially adopted in the Constitution.

Thus the great question of democratic gov-

ernment was settled by one of those strokes of Franklin's sublime luck or genius. He disapproved of the whole idea of a double-headed Congress; his masterful intellect worked out an arrangement which satisfied everybody and is one of the most important fundamental principles of our Constitution, and thus established a permanent federal union.

This was Franklin's greatest and most permanent service to his country, more valuable even than his important work in England or France, and forms a fitting close to a long life. The most active period of his life, was between his seventieth and eighty-second years. Indeed it would be difficult to find any other instances in history where men have done their best work when over eighty years of age.

Benjamin Franklin died April 17, 1790, at the age of eighty-four years and three months, at his home in Philadelphia, surrounded by his family and friends. Four days later he was buried in Christ Church burial ground, Philadelphia.

The grave in Christ Church burial ground is unmarked by a monument of any kind. Simplicity was the keynote of all the events of his long and useful life, and simplicity characterizes his final resting place.

Franklin died quite well off for those times,

leaving an estate worth over one hundred thousand dollars. His personal property consisted mostly of bonds and money, worth about seventy thousand dollars.

He enjoyed what to him was one of the greatest pleasures in life, children and grandchildren. He had six grandchildren, and no doubt often wished he had a hundred. He had no patience with celibacy, and was constantly urging marriage on his younger friends.

Ben Franklin and His Epitaph

Most printers are familiar with the epitaph written by Franklin on himself. The original of the corrected copy of this epitaph is in the autograph collection of the Library of Congress at Washington and is herewith reproduced.

Franklin wrote it in 1728, when he was 22 years of age, at which time Ben was industriously engaged in similar literary recreations.

Franklin was deeply interested in his trade, as may be imagined from the circumstances that he likened himself to a book. The epitaph always has been regarded as particularly graceful and novel in its conception. Many witty epitaphs in a similar vein were written during Franklin's time.

Epitaph written 1728.

The Body of
B. Franklin Printer.
(Like the Cover of an old Book
Its Contents torn out
And stript of its Lettering & Gilding)
lies here, Food for Worms.
But the Work shall not be lost;
For it will, (as he believed) appear once more
In a new and more elegant Edition
Revised and corrected.
By the Author.

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